THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

THE

HISTORY

OF

MYSELF AND MY FRIEND,

A NOVEL:

BY

ANNE PLUMPTRE.

VOL. III.

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IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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1103

"It is to affectation that the world owes its whole race of coxcombs. Nature, in her universal drama, never drew such a part; she has sometimes made a fool, but a coxcomb is always of his own making."

ANONYMOUS.

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THE HISTORY

OF

MYSELF AND MY FRIEND.

CHAPTER I.

Exemplification of the maxim that delays are dangerous.—Pleasures delayed are often through the same cause wholly lost.—A most extraordinary and unaccountable change of sentiment.

It was about three weeks after my accident, that Mr. and Mrs. Carberry and Katherine made their proposed visit to Brighton; I was by this time able to quit my bed and lie upon the sopha. Walter continued, as he assured me, to find the sea-side every day more and more delightful, and in the pleasure it afforded him he could he said almost forget those objects of art at Paris, on which he once hoped even then to be dwelling with transport. Nay, but upon my account he should scarcely have regretted that these rarities, how charm-

ing soever they might be, had been exchanged for the beauties and wonders of nature presented by the sea and the South-downs. He indeed now found so much amusement without doors, that I saw but little of him.

I can scarcely describe my sensations when I saw Katherine enter my sick-room; there was an expression of kind concern and anxiety in her countenance, that methought rendered it more like that of an angel than a mortal. She said nothing; but her looks spoke such a benevolent, such a feeling heart, that no words could have added to those mute indications of what was passing in her mind. Oh! what would I not have given that I could have poured out my soul in gratitude for her kindness! but if I had spoken to her, it must have been with calmness and composure; it was impossible at such a moment that I could do so, and I spoke not at all. I expressed my gratitude to Mr. and Mrs. Carberry, in terms I hope suitable to what the occasion demanded; but as to Katherine, not one word did we exchange in three visits which she made me during their stay at Brighton. Not that I had the vanity to attribute her silence to a motive in any way resembling my own; but I judged, both from what I then observed, and from all

I had before known of her, that the kindness of her heart loved rather to show itself by actions than by words; and since in this case there was no opportunity of showing it by actions, she was contented that it should not be expressed.

And yet methought this was not all; there was a seriousness about her, an appearance of a mind overcharged with painful impressions, which I could not see with indifference; which indeed gave me far more pain than I had ever received from my wound. I was sensible, however, that she had at this moment no common cause of uneasiness, that there was reason sufficient to account for the effect which I observed without seeking for any other cause. Poor Mrs. Carberry looked so ill, that I was well assured Katherine, whose affection for her mother was unbounded, could not but contemplate her looks with feelings amounting almost to agony; and how then could she be otherwise than silent and abstracted?

After three days stay at Brighton they proceeded on their excursion along the coast to East Bourne. If my regrets had been strongly awakened at parting with Mrs. Carberry to come down to Brighton, how much more keenly were they now felt! Indeed it seemed to me, that if my absence was to be protracted

to three or four months, I must now have seen her for the last time. I could not help mentioning my alarms to Walter. He had not been struck with his aunt's appearance; but he said that he supposed this was the reason why Katherine was so grave; and though he was heartily concerned that there should be any cause of alarm upon his aunt's account, he was glad to find there was some way in which Katherine's reserve might be accounted for; it was a thing which appeared so unaccountable in such a gay place as Brighton, that indeed he was afraid he had in some unknown way offended her.

My father was of Walter's opinion, that Miss Kitty was exceedingly grave indeed; he never hardly see a young lady to his thinking so grave. "She is to be sure, as Mr. Walter says, a very fine young lady, looks quite good-natured, and spoke to me as free and as kind as if I had been quite her equal; but I thought somehow it was a little comical that she never said one word about you, Sam, not even so much as that she was sorry for your accident; which to be sure I should have thought that every body as knew you would have said that at least; above all Miss Kitty, if it was only to please her dear Mamma, for to be sure nobody could speak more kind and affectionate about

about you than Mrs. Carberry did. And if it hadn't been that Miss Kitty spoke so good-natured to me, I should have thought she was too proud to care any thing about you because you wasn't a gentleman born. But then you know though you a'n't a gentleman born, you are quite a gentleman in your behaviour, thanks to Mr. Armstrong and all his goodness; and this must be true, because Mr. Conway says so; and if Miss Kitty wasn't above speaking to me, it couldn't be pride that she never said any thing about you, no not even when her dear Mamma was saying ever such kind things. But I suppose she somehow or other does not fancy you, and all people can't have the same fancies; and if she don't, I dare say there's enough to be found that do."

"Pooh, father! nonsense, your head runs upon nothing but the ladies' fancyings; it cannot be expected that every body should see me with the same eyes that you do. Parents are always full of ridiculous notions about the perfections of their children; but believe me, the ladies are not so soon captivated as you seem to expect, particularly with a man who has neither rank nor fortune to offer them: so pray, father, have done with the subject, and find some other to talk about, or get a book and read."

"Well, well, Sam, don't be angry, and I won't say another word, since 'tis so disagreeable like to you."

I must own I spoke here a little too pettishly, and I have often reproached myself with it since; but my good father very unintentionally kept me in perpetual torture by these kind of discussions, and it was necessary for my repose to put an end to it somewhat authoritatively. My most earnest wish was, that I could banish Katherine wholly from my thoughts, and my utmost endeavours were exerted to do so; while my father, in these perorations, was constantly acting in opposition to them.

At length, after a confinement of six weeks, my leg was sufficiently recovered to admit of my using it again, though sparingly; and I thought that, if our French excursion was to be prosecuted, we might now begin to prepare for our departure. This idea I communicated to Walter, when, after a long pause, in which I saw there was something labouring in his mind that he scarcely knew how to communicate, he said:—"Ah, Sam, I know not what you will say, what you will think of me; but a lapse of six weeks has wrought such a change in my sentiments, that I have not merely lost all relish for this excursion, I have now even an invincible repugnance to it."

"Astonishing!—And what can have occasioned this change?"

"Nay, I know not myself.—I cannot tell how it is to be accounted for in any other way, than referring it to that capriciousness and unsteadiness of character which has been the bane of my whole life. Sam, this matter has long been labouring in my mind, yet I knew not how to mention it; many times have I resolved that I would summon up resolution to do so, but my courage failed me: I knew that I was exposing myself to your just censure; I knew that I was depriving you of an excursion in which you had promised yourself very great pleasure; and I detested myself for suffering this caprice to gain such an ascendancy over me; but the sentiment is more powerful than myself, and I never can resolve to go to France.—If you think yourself well enough to bear travelling, and above all, if the surgeon thinks you may travel with safety, let us leave this place; but let it be to return to London, not to proceed to Paris."

"Walter, you astonish me beyond measure!—Have you forgotten, that this journey was not undertaken merely as a party of pleasure? that it was planned equally with the idea of profit to you, in the advantages you would derive from it in the pursuit of your profession?"

"Aye, there's another detestable part of the story O Sam! would you believe it?—can it be possible for any body to believe it?—that profession, Sam,———"

"Well, say on."

"I can pursue it no longer."

"This is still more incomprehensible."

"'Tis incomprehensible to myself; yet so it is."

"Now, then, I see a sufficient reason for your no longer wishing to go to Paris;—but what can have occasioned this change?"

"Caprice, nothing but detestable caprice. Sam, what can I do?—You are my friend, my steady, my unwearied friend; you have good sense and judgement; advise me then in the most disagreeable exigency that I ever experienced. Say, how can I ever tell my father that this profession, to which I was lately so eagerly devoted, to my engaging in which he was so adverse, yet sacrificed all his own feelings and wishes to yield to mine,—how can I ever tell him that these sacrifices are become nugatory, that my inclinations are wholly changed, and that the labours of the pencil, once my sole delight, are become my aversion?"

"Indeed, Walter, I know not whether I am most astonished or concerned at what you tell me. It is impossible that your good father

should not be hurt beyond measure at this sudden change in your sentiments; for though the profession was not one that met with his entire approbation, yet, since you have embarked in it, I am sure the quitting it in this hasty manner will give him infinite concern."

"I know it will; and 'tis therefore that I have never mentioned the subject before. I wished if possible to combat my feelings; I have done every thing in my power to subdue them, but it is impossible; and the only thing remaining is, to soften the stroke to him in the best manner you can devise."

"Walter, it seems impossible that a change thus sudden and total can be the result of caprice entirely. Surely there must be some other cause which has contributed to producing this most unaccountable effect!—O tell me, I conjure you, if it be so!—You know I am your friend; you know that you may confide your secret to me, that it will be safe in my bosom whatever it may be: but possessed of the whole truth, it will be a much less difficult task to break the matter to your good father, if that must be done at last.—Or perhaps some means might be found to reconcile you to the continuance of your present pursuit."

"No, Sam, believe me, 'tis nothing but caprice: I really have no secret to impart, I can

say no more than what I have already said; 'tis wholly unaccountable to myself; but to my studies in painting I never can return."

"To what, then, do you wish to apply yourself?"

"Nay, God knows;—and I hope he will direct my choice; for indeed, Sam, I know not how to make a choice myself."

"Walter, I cannot deny that this information gives me the most heartfelt concern. What to advise I do not know; I am afraid this sudden change will give Mr. Armstrong much more uneasiness than your first resolution to devote yourself to painting: will not a little reflection change your mind? It seems to me that you have for some reason, I know not what, perhaps wearied with the unfortunate delay which my accident has occasioned, taken a dislike to this French journey; and connecting the idea of it with your profession, you have taken exception to that also. But though some advantages might be derived from your studying awhile at Paris, it is not a thing absolutely necessary: the journey was a plan of your own, and Mr. Armstrong consented to it as a thing from which he thought you would derive both pleasure and profit: but since your inclinations are changed, he will never require you to pursue it, agreeable or disagreeable."

" No, Sam; dislike to the French journey, though I confess myself now wholly repugnant to it, is not the sole cause of this change. Independently of that, I feel that I never can go on with painting; think what little progress I have made in several months close attention to it; for you must allow, Sam, that I have been very attentive."

" But this you knew before you set out from London."

" Very true, yet I thought little of it. Wandering about here, I have been led to look back to what I had done, and I am indignant at reflecting that my last attempt is scarcely better than my first. 'Tis this idea that has disgusted me; and if I were now to go to Paris, I do not know that I should have resolution to enter the Gallery; the pictures would only seem a reproach on my own stupidity. So, Sam, you must advise me; I am determined never to take a pencil into my hand again; I only want to know how the world at large, and my dear father in particular, may best be admitted to this grand secret."

" What if you were to go yourself to Langham, and talk over the matter with him? perhaps———"

" Oh no, no, Sam, that's impossible; it must be told him by letter, unless you will

be so much my friend as to go and talk with him: he has such an opinion of you, that he'll be more reconciled to the thing in a quarter of an hour's conversation with you, than by ever so many letters written by me:—and as to seeing him, he must be somewhat recovered from the chagrin this will occasion him, before I can support an interview."

"Well, let it rest for a day or two, and then we can talk further about it."

Among all the instances of versatility I had seen in Walter, by none was I ever so completely chagrined and mortified. That there must be some secret cause, of which he was scarcely perhaps himself aware, or else cautiously concealed, to effect so extraordinary a revolution, I could scarcely doubt, yet what it could be I was wholly unable to conjecture; and in the absence of all clue to guide me to the truth, most uneasy suspicions were awakened. I was afraid that, left to himself, as he had necessarily been, he had got into some connections, either male or female, by whom he had been cruelly led astray: yet one thing was to be observed, which militated against this idea, that he had never been out late at night, never so late as ten o'clock, excepting twice, when he said, and I have no doubt said truly, that he had been at the thea-

tre. But twice in six weeks a young man might go to the theatre, without giving occasion to suspect him of keeping bad company; nay, his moderation in not having gone more frequently, was rather matter to excite admiration: circumstanced as he was, one should not have thought him very unreasonable if he had gone twice a week, instead of only twice in six weeks.

I suffered three days to pass, and then renewed the subject; but found Walter precisely in the same disposition, decidedly averse to going on with his profession, and assuring me that he should never be easy till he was permitted to change it. Nothing, then, seemed to remain but for me to be the bearer of these unwelcome tidings to the rectory at Langham; and Walter said he would go up to town, his uncle Shelburne being there, though his aunt and the family were gone to a house which he had taken for the summer on Ham Common. Before we parted, he however said, that in thinking over different professions, with a view to the new choice he was to make, he thought he should like to study surgery better than any thing; or, if his father would prefer it, he should not at all dislike the law, studying first under his uncle Shelburne, or going immedi-

ately to one of the Inns of Court, whichever should be judged best.

It was with a heavy heart indeed, that a few days after I received this ultimatum from Walter, I got into the stage with my father to accompany him on his return to Langham. It was difficult to say whether the abandonment of the French journey was to him matter of greater surprise or disappointment. "Well, Sam," he said, when I told him of it, "who should ever have thought of young Mr. Walter being so fickleminded? Though he always was a little slippery when he was a boy, yet now he's a man a body might expect him to be more steady. But some folks never is steady all their lives, and it's my belief that Master Walter never will be, God forgive me for taking the liberty to have such thoughts of Mr. Armstrong's son! I wonder what his dear Papa will say: he'll be mortally grieved for certain; and then 'tis such a disappointment to you, Sam! for God knows now whether you'll ever see foreign parts all your life; which to be sure every body must like extremely to see them, because of all the curious things. And I was a-talking one day with some folks upon the beach, as was just come home in the packet, and what d'ye think they told me? Why,

one of 'em said that he'd seen a man at *Deep*,— so he called the place I believe where he had been at in France, but I don't suppose that was the right way to speak it, because of their outlandish way of calling things,—but there he see a man that came from the wine countries, and if he didn't tell him that sometimes they could get wine there for only a halfpenny a bottle! but that's only sometimes, but they may almost always get it at threehalfpence—only threehalfpence, Sam, just such halfpence as ours, and not worth a bit more; which that I said I thought that the man must tell *tarradiddles*, for I couldn't believe such a thing; but he said it was quite true, and to be sure if it is, France must be a very fine place! Nay, for that matter, he said too it wasn't true that they eat nothing but frogs, for they've as good beef and mutton, and fish, and chickens, and turkeys, and all sorts of things just as we have, and a great deal cheaper; which therefore I think that 'tis very wrong for people to say that they've nothing to eat but frogs, for we've no right to tell lies about France any more than about England. And if you had but a gone, Sam, you'd have seen whether 'twas true or not; and whatever you had said, that I should have been very sure I might believe, because I never knew you tell any thing but truth; and

then you could have wrote a book about it, and every body would have known that there's as good things to be had there as here. But now there's an end of all this pleasure, and I can't imagine what young Mr. Walter have got into his head to disappoint people so. It's my belief that 'tis all because he doesn't like to leave Miss Kitty; and though he says he's going to London, who knows when our backs are turned where he may go, and whether he mayn't be going after her? Well, Sam, I dare say you won't fret about it, but it must be a mortal great disappointment to you."

And indeed it was a very great disappointment to me, though I believe that I felt it less than my father did: every thing that could give me consequence, as he conceived, in the eyes of the world, was to him a new source of delight, and I believe he had no idea that any thing could give me greater consequence than visiting foreign parts. Yet how great soever might be my disappointment, I think I can say with truth that it was the thing of all others which I least felt upon the occasion. I was much more deeply concerned at looking forward to the severe wound which I had to inflict upon the paternal feelings of the excellent rector of Langham. I was, besides, very far from easy with respect to the motives which

actuated Walter. I could not persuade myself that the whole was to be ascribed to caprice. I thought there must be some spring which had set his caprice in motion, but what that could be I perplexed myself in vain to divine. That it was a reasonable excuse I could not entertain a hope, for why then was it concealed from me?—from me, towards whom till this moment he never had a secret!—This idea gave me more pain than any thing: never till this moment did I feel my own accident so unfortunate; for I was afraid that my confinement, and the manner in which he had been abandoned to himself in consequence of it, had been principally instrumental in producing this truly painful effect. I thought of the lady whom we had rescued;—could any attachment have been formed between her and Walter, and could it be by this that he was influenced? —Yet I never heard him mention having even seen her after the moment when she had been deposited in safety at her uncle's door. I once from curiosity asked the mistress of the house where we lodged, if she knew any thing about Mr. Bridport and his niece? She said she did not; that they were people who had never been at Brighton before, and did not seem to have any acquaintance there; that the lady was often riding out, but that

neither she nor her uncle joined much in the gaieties of the place; that they seemed to be people of good fortune, for they spent their money freely, and paid for every thing very regularly. All this did not look like their being persons of a disorderly turn, from whom any thing materially amiss was to be apprehended.

I could not by any means concur in my father's opinion that he was going after Miss Kitty, for if that had been the case there was no reason why his plans should be kept secret from me; I was more afraid that there was some other miss in the case; and yet when I scrutinized the matter closely, I could not say that I had any sufficient ground for my suspicions. Oh! how rejoiced I was at this moment that I had not given way to the idea I had entertained some months before, of changing back my profession! I should have thought indeed, if I had taken such a step, and Walter afterwards had done the same, that some dæmon had presided over our births, and that we were both to be eternally plaguing our parents and our friends.

Had any one told me a week before, that the time would come, nay, was then very fast approaching, when I should shudder at beholding the parsonage at Langham, and shrink from

the idea of entering it, while Mr. Armstrong was still its owner, I should have thought the thing impossible; yet, as I saw the chimney tops peeping above the trees in passing near it to go to my father's house, I would have given the world to have been spared the visit I had now undertaken to make.

CHAPTER II.

Conferences at the rectory at Langham.—One in Lincoln's Inn Fields abruptly broken off.—Specimen of a very different kind of letter from those with which the reader has been already presented.

In my present state of uncertainty as to what was passing in Walter's mind, I was not very easy at being obliged to separate myself from him. I thought, however, that all things considered I was acting for the best, and that my errand to Langham accomplished, which need not occupy many days, I should immediately rejoin him in London. Indeed I had no doubt that he dealt sincerely with me when he talked of going to his uncle Shelburne's; and since he seemed to shrink so much from an immediate interview with his father, I thought that he could not be better disposed of.

At my request, my father had not fixed with his old dame the precise time when she might expect him home, or mentioned any idea of my being his companion. He had only in general terms said that I was now so well as to be able to think of moving, and that she might therefore expect him very speedily. I wished to be myself the bearer to Mr. Armstrong of the

first intimation that he was so soon to see me;—that it should not become village gossip previous to my appearance that I was coming with my father, when perhaps it might make its way to his ears, and occasion him painful speculations upon the cause of a movement so unexpected. I had prepared myself with a note to him, which I dispatched the moment I arrived. In it, after first stating that I had left his son Walter well the day before at Brighton, I informed him that I had accompanied my father on account of a piece of business of a very particular nature, which I thought it much better to talk over with him (Mr. Armstrong) personally, than to mention by letter, and that I would wait upon him whenever it would be convenient. His answer was a request that I would come immediately, for he was under the greatest anxiety to know what could occasion my taking this journey.

I lost not a moment, therefore, but hastened to the rectory. It was a consolation to me to see the excellent rector looking in so much better health than when I had parted with him the autumn before: he received me with his usual kindness, and expressed himself with as much gratitude to Heaven that my accident had not been attended with more serious consequences, as if I had been his own son. I

hastened then to impart to him all that had passed between Walter and myself, not omitting to represent that it was at Walter's particular desire I had come to talk this very unpleasant matter over with him. I cannot describe the varied emotions with which he listened to me: one while his benevolent eyes were raised to Heaven with a sublime expression of supplication that it would please the supreme Disposer of events to enable him to bear these repeated trials, inflicted through a channel in which they were felt with tenfold poignancy, with the resignation and fortitude required of him as a man and as a christian; the next they were cast upon the ground, as if wholly dejected and overcome; then turned to me, with a mixture of kindness, and anxiety to know all, which expressed much more than could have been expressed by words. My narrative was concluded with stating the mixture of hope and fear by which my bosom was agitated, reflecting on the one hand upon the many circumstances which seemed to repress the apprehension that more was to be known than Walter had communicated, and on the other the obvious improbability, nay almost impossibility as it seemed, that a change so total and so extraordinary could be the effect of caprice alone.

"Oh, Samuel," he said, when I had finished, "I could not doubt, the moment I heard of your arrival, that you had brought me some unwelcome tidings of my poor Walter; but my apprehensions could hardly suggest any so painful as what you have communicated. If there were nothing in this but the desertion of a professiŏn in which I did not see him engage with any feelings of satisfaction, I should behold him abandon it not only without pain, but with pleasure. But it is impossible even, with a person of his volatile nature, that there should not be some secret reason to occasion a change so sudden; a change to which nothing that is apparent to us could lead: some deep mystery is involved in the matter; I tremble to think what the explanation of it may prove.

It is the more extraordinary, since, when he was down here previous to his departure, he was exceedingly delighted with the thoughts of his excursion, and could scarcely talk of any thing else; not a day passed that he did not repeat the warmest expressions of gratitude for the consent I had given to his going. He assured me that he could hardly have answered to himself the putting me to so great an expense, but in the hope that the advantages derived from it would be such as to ena-

ble him soon to repay it all. Nor was he less eager in his expressions of gratitude for my having consented to his devoting himself to painting, assuring me that the progress he made exceeded his most sanguine expectations. He said that the last picture he had painted, had been submitted to the inspection of a particularly good judge, who had made him several high compliments upon it; such compliments as gave him good reason to hope that, if his future success corresponded to what that seemed to promise, his name would hardly be behind that of any English artist who had yet appeared. Saying all this," continued Mr. Armstrong, "how can I not suppose that something altogether extraordinary has occasioned the present change?"

We now entered into a long conversation upon the subject; but no answers which it was in my power to make could throw any light upon the matter, or afford any clue to the development of the mystery. At length, Mr. Armstrong suggested the sending for my father, and making some inquiries of him. As he had occasionally gone out, after I was so much amended that his constant attendance upon me was rendered unnecessary, it was possible that some circumstances might have come to his knowledge, which, though trifling and insig-

nificant in themselves, might tend to throw light upon the matter.

The servant was accordingly sent with a note requesting his attendance, and in a very short time he made his appearance. "Robert," said Mr. Armstrong, "this is a very unfortunate affair which has happened with regard to my son, nor can I help being afraid that there is some secret reason for his determining so suddenly to abandon his purpose of going to France, which he will not disclose because he knows it is one I cannot approve. You may perhaps have had more opportunities of observing his conduct at Brighton than your son had, as you could go out occasionally, and he was entirely confined: did you ever then see any thing which could lead you to suppose that he had got into dishonourable connections or dishonourable practices in any way?—I venture to put this question to you, Robert, because I consider you as a man of sense, who will not mistake my meaning, or make what I say a subject of gossip and babbling among your neighbours. I do not wish to be a rigid parent with my son; I wish to pass over the trifling follies of youth; but there is something altogether so extraordinary and unaccountable in his conduct, that I cannot help being alarmed lest it should be occasioned by

circumstances disgraceful to himself, and which would give me the most heartfelt uneasiness. Tell me, then, had you ever any reason to suppose that he frequented improper company, or was involved in improper practices of any kind?"

"Never, I can assure your honour. After I used to go out a little myself, when Sam's leg was got so tolerable that he had no occasion to have me always at his elbow, and he could read a little and amuse himself, which to be sure otherwise I never would have left him; but then I liked to walk about and see what sort of a place Brighton was, because 'tis quite famous all over the country, and to see the sea too, which I had never had an opportunity of seeing it before, and a wonderful piece of water it is. It often made me think of the Scriptures, where there is so many places that the sea is mentioned, and above all in the Psalms, which I thought that all those fine passages was nothing more than was quite true, and particularly in the cviith Psalm, verse the 23d, and others that follow it—"

"But, father, you forget Mr. Armstrong's question;" for indeed I thought it right here to interpose and put a curb upon his eloquence, since, in his raptures at the glories o the watery waste, he totally lost sight of the main

object for which he had been summoned;—indeed, any one but Mr. Armstrong would have checked him angrily, long before.

"Aye, aye, true, Sam," he said, "and I humbly beg Mr. Armstrong's pardon, and hope he'll forgive me."

"Oh, most freely," said Mr. Armstrong; "and now proceed, Robert."

"Well, I often used to go promiscuously down to the beach, and I've often seen Mr. Walter,—but he was always by himself, never had no company at all with him; sometimes he'd stop and talk to the fishermen and people about, and ask 'em a great many questions about their employment and such things, as free and good-natured as could be, but that he always was free and good-natured with every body; but as to seeing him in bad company, it was never any such thing, I can assure your honour; and I no more believe that he kept bad company than I did myself, neither men nor women, though to be sure it is such a place for loose women as I never see in my life, enough to ruin many a young man; but as to Mr. Walter's going after 'em, I'll be bound for it, 'twas no such thing. Sometimes he used to walk to a little village upon the beach two or three miles off, out Shoreham way, but how should he get any harm there? you know.

If I might be so bold as to tell your honour my thoughts, though perhaps you'd think it was too presuming in me to think such things, but we can't always help the thoughts that will come into our heads—"

"I dare say, Robert, that you will not say any thing improper; therefore speak out."

"Why then it was in my head, that 'tis all after Miss Kitty, Mrs. Carberry's daughter, that Mr. Walter doesn't like to go to foreign parts. After she and her Papa and Mamma had left Brighton, he seemed to fare so dull and so lonely; and it's my thought that if it hadn't been all out of kindness to Sam, he'd have gone with 'em, for he seemed to look after the carriage with such longing eyes when he see 'em go away. So whether he thinks that Miss Kitty doesn't like him so well as he likes her, and 'tis that makes him dull, I can't tell; and perhaps he thinks that if he's gone for three or four months, somebody else may come in the mean time and take her off, and if he stays he can look after her. But for certain, Mr. Walter was quite a different man after she had been at Brighton, to what he was before, which that makes me think this is all along of her, and I hope your honour will forgive me for presuming to have thoughts about Mr. Walter; but we working people can see as well

as gentlefolks partly, when people has a liking to each other, which I hope you will excuse my saying so."

Nothing that my father had said tended in the least to elucidate this mysterious affair; and after a great deal more conversation with Mr. Armstrong, it was agreed that I should return to town, and endeavour to persuade Walter to come down to Langham to consult with his father what was best to be done. "Would that I could go to town myself!" said he, "but that is out of the question. If I am to risk my own life in the attempt, so far from doing any good as to the removal of the present evil, I am only creating a greater. But by talking with him I may learn something more, and either persuade him to continue his present occupation, if that should appear advisable, or, if not, I can better judge what is expedient to be done."

Accordingly, after staying two days at Langham, I returned to London. My adieu with Mr. Armstrong was solemn and affecting: "O Samuel!" he said, "little did I think, when in compliance with your father's wishes I first took you as a pupil, that the kindness which I was considered as showing to you was to be reflected back so abundantly upon myself; that I was nursing up such a comforter to myself in trials peculiarly arduous to one impressed as

deeply as I am with the extent and imperious nature of the duties of a parent. I feel that in leading my son, if that can be accomplished, safely through the thorny paths of a youth such as his, I must owe much to your assistance. Your friendship to him and to me will I fear be often put severely to the test, but let it not slacken!—I may never be able sufficiently to reward your zeal; but there is one who can, and who we may be sure will more than sufficiently repay it."

My father's adieu was of a different kind.—"Good bye, Sam," says he, "God bless you and keep you wherever you are! But to be sure I am mortal sorry to see you going back to London instead of being a great traveller, and to know all about foreign parts; and pray God that he may be pleased to change Mr. Walter's mind again, and that you may go at last! for I'm sure 'twould be much better for him if Miss Kitty is unkind, than to go moping about by himself at Brighton as he used to do. And I would not advise you, Sam, ever to mope so about any lady; for there's enough in the world, and a man can always ask, and I don't see why there isn't a hundred others as good as Miss Kitty who'd be glad enough to have Mr. Walter, though Miss Kitty is a very nice young lady; and if he'd only go to foreign

parts, he'd soon think no more about her; for if she's set upon not having him, it isn't all the running after her in the world that will make her alter her mind. So good bye, Sam, and mind what I say, and try to make Mr. Walter more cheerful-hearted, and go about and amuse himself."

I found Walter, conformably to his intentions expressed when we parted, at his uncle's in Lincoln's Inn Fields. I told him what had passed between me and his father, and how much it was the latter's wish that he should come down to Langham, that they might talk over together the subject which now troubled equally the minds of both. Walter scarcely made me any reply; he inquired anxiously after his father's health and my own, said he would consider of what I had suggested, and as he was going down that day with his uncle to Ham Common, he might perhaps talk the matter over with him and write to his father.

"Perhaps, Walter?—Surely, if you do not comply with Mr. Armstrong's wish to see you at Langham, you will at least write to him directly?"

"Sam, I don't know what I shall do;—only let me entreat you to drop the subject for the present; I must prepare to go with my uncle, nobody can advise me better than he

can,—he will even intercede with my father if I want an intercessor:—wait then till I have talked with him, and do you write and tell my father of my intentions."

At this moment Mr. Shelburne's carriage drove up to the door; Walter got into it, saying he was to take up his uncle by the way, nor did I see any thing more of him for a week. Had I not been assured that it was really his uncle's carriage he got into, and heard him order the coachman to stop at a house in Piccadilly, which I knew was that of a gentleman by whom his uncle was much employed in law business, I confess apprehensions would have been awakened in me, that this visit was only a pretence to shake me off, and that it was upon no good errand he was going. But these two circumstances left me no room to doubt that he was really going to Ham Common with his uncle, and the whole matter wore, if possible, a more mysterious aspect than ever. What could this secret be that was to be intrusted so readily to his uncle, yet which he seemed unwilling to communicate either to his father or me?—This looked somewhat like a serious intention of proposing himself to his cousin Margaret. But if this was all, how came the idea to seize him at Brighton, when he had left London, intending to go abroad, without seem-

ing to have a thought of Margaret? Besides, if this was all, why was it not confessed to me at once? I had laughed at first, and then seriously remonstrated against any idea of his making an offer to Margaret, young as he was, and yet unestablished in life: but this seemed a very insufficient reason for the mysterious conduct he was now observing, if it originated in this alone. If any thing could render the whole matter more incomprehensible to me, it was the following letter which I received two days after from Walter at Ham Common:

'My dear Sam,

'If you have thought of late that my head has been full of strange and unaccountable fancies, at this I cannot be surprised; it is impossible to deny that my conduct has been altogether calculated to make you think so. But we all have our comical humours at times; and since you, my good Steady, have not been wholly free from them, is it extraordinary that your giddy versatile friend, to whom the idea of steadiness is a thing altogether as incomprehensible as the idea of colours to a man born blind,—is it, I say, extraordinary, that since your phlegm has not been exempt from these sallies, as witness the fortnight's absence from Chatham Place never satisfactorily accounted for;—these

things considered, is it at all surprising that I also should have *par fois* my eccentric flights? One of these, to be sure, has whirled me about very strangely of late. First I would go to Paris, then I would not; first I was highly delighted with Brighton, then I grudged every day that I was detained there; not because I wanted to proceed on our foreign tour; but that truly I had gotten it into my head that I was impatient beyond measure to return to London: —and why?—not to renew those hours once so delightful to me, when wholly absorbed in the labours of the pencil, but to throw pencils, easels, pictures, and every thing into the fire, and renounce the pursuit for ever.

'But the whirl is a little over, Sam, and— I give you free leave here to lift up your hands as much as you please, nay, even to turn up the whites of your eyes if you should feel so inclined;—I give you, in short, free leave to make use of any mode of expressing your astonishment best suited to the degree of it, which I am confident you will feel when you hear that a counter revolution has been effected in my brain in a manner altogether as whimsical and rapid as the revolution itself. Instead of making a bonfire of the whole furniture of my painting-room, not excepting even Melancholy, who I am afraid would have made but a melan-

choly bonfire,—instead of dooming them to this fate, the genius of Apelles has once more waved his magic wand over my head ; painting is as much the object of my adoration as ever, and to painting will I return with an ardour which this sublime art only can inspire, as soon as my week in this hospitable and agreeable mansion is completed.

'Yes, Sam, this is now my fixed irrevocable determination. How to account for my late freak I cannot tell ; 'tis sufficient that it is over, and that I shall endeavour all in my power to prevent any return of a similar paroxysm. Forgive me, if you can, the disappointment I have occasioned you in our Paris scheme not being carried into execution : perhaps some time hence it may yet take place,—but I dare not now renew my application for leave to go ; and besides, I have another reason for wishing it deferred. You noticed to me some time ago your alarms on my aunt Carberry's account, arising from her looking, as you thought, extremely ill. I must confess that the same impression was not made upon me : but alas! Sam, it is with heartfelt concern I have to say that you judged them but too accurately. She did not appear at all benefited by her tour, and yesterday's post brought a letter from Katherine, in which she says that both herself and

Mr. Carberry are so uneasy about her, that she has yielded to their earnest entreaties to go to town for advice, and they will be at Chatham Place in the course of a few days. I cannot say how much I grieve at the thoughts of there being any ground of apprehension for so valuable a life, but under such apprehensions I am sure you will agree with me in not wishing our tour now to be thought of.

'As I trust that my return to reason,—or, if not quite to reason, at least to something as much approaching to it as can reasonably be expected of me,—will be matter of satisfaction, not of uneasiness, to my father, I have not thought it necessary to employ either uncle Shelburne or yourself as a mediator for me, but have announced it to him myself. I have told him that 'tis my fixed and determined resolution to return to my labours on the canvass, and not only so, but to give him ocular demonstration that I am not idle. If then some little time hence he will bend his steps towards a certain neat little white house in his own parish, picturesquely situated near a clear little brook, with two fine old elms on one side, a little flower-garden in front, and a spacious *jardin potager* behind, where dwell a good honest old Baucis and Philemon, he shall there see a specimen of the progress I have made in

the portrait of a certain strange being of his acquaintance, for whom this same old Baucis and Philemon have a most odd and unaccountable affection, though why they should have it nobody can tell. This, Sam, will in some measure explain what, in returning to his painting-room, will be one of the first employments of

'Yours ever most truly,

'WALTER ARMSTRONG.'

I cannot say that Walter's letter gave me any satisfaction as to the motives by which his late conduct had been actuated. Was it to be imputed wholly to caprice? Still I knew not how to persuade myself that this could be the case:—and if it was not, his persevering silence as to his motives for suddenly abandoning both our projected tour and his profession, with his apparently-unmotived return to the latter, gave reason to apprehend something which he felt to be so wrong, that he had not the resolution to impart it even to me. If the whole was caprice, such sallies gave but a mortifying prospect as to what was to be expected in future. Three days after the receipt of Walter's letter, I received the following from Mr. Armstrong:

'MY DEAR SAMUEL,

'A letter which I have this moment re-

ceived from Walter has somewhat abated my anxiety upon his account, though it is by no means wholly removed. As far as it convinces me that he really is with his uncle, it is satisfactory; for I confess that I was not free from apprehension of his having other objects in view in returning to London, especially as he appeared no less anxious to take the journey by himself, and send you in a contrary direction. Thank God! I may now hope that these alarms were groundless, since he placed himself immediately under the eye of his kind relation and protector Mr. Shelburne, a situation which of all others he would have avoided if he had been in the pursuit of illicit objects. Yet one thing still gives me much concern,—that I fear his return to his profession is not the result of any reasoning upon the subject, or of a renewed inclination to it; that it will appear in the end to be rather a nominal than a real return, assumed for the moment to relieve him from an embarrassment which he sees no other way of avoiding. Yes, my dear Samuel, I think I see from the whole tenor of his letter, and it is needless to say with what pain I see it, —amid all his endeavours to deceive both himself and me as to the true motives by which he is actuated, that his reluctance to seeing me at the present moment is so great, that he is ready

to seize on any thing which will give him a fair reason to himself for avoiding it. As his return to his profession will then obviate the ground on which principally I wished him to come down, he has adopted that as the least of two evils presented to his choice. All this, I am afraid, I collect from his letter, though he is far from saying it; but he concludes his elaborate excuses for his late conduct, by hoping that what he has said will obtain my pardon; and that since one of the subjects on which his presence at Langham was required by me ceases, I shall not now wish him to take the journey, but concur with him in thinking, that the best thing he can do will be by unwearied application to make up for the time he has lost. This I own is plausible, nay just reasoning; and yet there appears a strain of reserve in his letter, which seems to say that the corollary, though just, is drawn from premises which, if known, could not be approved; and he dreads lest the seeing me should lead to his being so hard pressed upon the subject, that the disclosure of them would be inevitable. I am perhaps unreasonably anxious about him, and therefore conjure up to myself imaginary ills; nor can any one who is not himself a father enter into what I feel at this moment: yet surely among all to whom my poor Walter's

disposition is well known my anxiety will not appear wholly unjustifiable. I am convinced that his heart is good; but his judgement is unsound, and easily led astray; and he runs infinite hazard of falling the victim of any plausible tongue who will take the pains to mask bad intentions by specious appearances.

'O Samuel! watch him narrowly, I conjure you. He expresses a desire to paint your portrait, and send it to your worthy parents: a higher gratification I think it would be impossible to procure them. Indulge him, I entreat, in this wish; it will give you a fair opportunity of seeing him more frequently, consequently a greater probability of arriving at a solution of the present mystery, if mystery indeed there be; it will lead to a freedom of conversation which may dispose him to lay open his heart; and if you can give me any satisfactory information, I know that I need not ask for its being imparted without delay.

'Walter's letter affords me another cruel source of uneasiness, in the account it gives of Eleanor's health; a sad confirmation of the alarms you expressed, Samuel, on her account when you were down at Langham. I have since received a very excellent letter indeed from my niece Katherine, mentioning with the deepest concern the alarms they are un-

der, and their intention of going immediately to town for advice for her mother. I pray God the journey may answer. Next to a confirmation of my apprehensions on my poor boy's account, I know of nothing which would give my heart a deeper wound than the loss of a sister for whom I have ever entertained so strong an affection.

'Believe me, with great regard,

'My dear Samuel,

'Ever yours truly,

'BERNARD ARMSTRONG.'

Walter returned to town at the expiration of his week at Ham Common, and immediately resumed his labours at the pencil with the utmost assiduity. I sat to him for my picture: the likeness was allowed by all who saw it to be very strong, and the picture to contain some masterly strokes. It was sent down to my father without his having any idea previously of what was going forward, and was received by him and my mother with tears of delight and gratitude. But this was all the effect it produced. In my various sittings, though the conversation between the artist and myself was always kept up with great spirit, and I often adverted to Brighton with jokes upon our continental tour, I could never get from him more than an entreaty to drop the subject. "For

Heaven's sake, Sam, hold your tongue, and don't reproach me so cruelly with my detestable capriciousness. I shall never forgive myself for having deprived you of the pleasure you would have experienced in visiting Paris, so say no more about it." In some such way he always parried the conversation, and at the conclusion of the picture I was just as wise as at the commencement, till at last I seriously began to think he was right in ascribing the whole to caprice. By degrees also Mr. Armstrong seemed to become of the same opinion, and to think no more of what had passed: indeed his attention was soon called away to another object, respecting which his concern and anxiety were every day increased instead of being diminished.

CHAPTER III.

A fashionable party to France.—Cruel embarrassments on arriving at the coast.—Debates whether to proceed or not.—The embarrassments obviated, and how.

THIS object was the very decidedly declining state of poor Mrs. Carberry's health. The physician who was consulted upon her case at first affected to say that he saw no cause of alarm; but I suspected that he was in this only doing as is common among the faculty, endeavouring to keep up her spirits, and the spirits of those around her, that the malady might not be increased through her own dejection or that of others.

It was just about the same period that I had been sent for the year before to the rectory at Langham, on the very alarming attack of Mr. Armstrong, that I saw Mrs. Carberry arrive in Chatham Place, accompanied by her husband and Katherine, and I was not less alarmed at this moment on her account than I had been the year before on her brother's. Not that there appeared reason to apprehend her immediatedissolution; but I thought it evident that her doom was sealed, and that a few months at the utmost must terminate her mortal career. She

did not remain in town when she came up in September, but returned after a week's stay to New Lodge; towards the end of October she again came up, and returned no more.

Maurice had all the summer been playing off the gay man of ton, *à toute outrance.* The Earl of Borrowdale's family mansion in the north was never occupied during his minority; the Countess and her daughters, the latter of whom were both much older than their brother, preferring, as a summer residence, the ease of a fashionable watering-place to the dull state of the chateau; and having during several preceding summers gone the round of the most fashionable places upon the coast, they determined this year to exchange the sea breezes for the salubrious air and romantic scenery of Tunbridge Wells. Nothing could be more fortunate for Maurice, since from the vicinity of New Lodge to this favoured spot, though under the paternal roof, his intimacy with these dear friends had not experienced any interruption.

In fact, though nominally resident with his father, his time was almost entirely spent at Tunbridge Wells. If now and then he came home for a night, he did not fail to be absent the whole day; but even the nights as well as days were the greater part of them spent at the Wells.

His assiduities and gallantries were more particularly addressed to Lady Amanda; and she accepted them in a manner which, since his ideas could not be mistaken, was wholly unjustifiable, as it is to be presumed she never had any intention of lending a favourable ear to proposals of a serious nature from him when they should be made. Scarcely a day passed that Maurice and his friends had not some expensive party together, in all of which her ladyship was his constant .companion in his tandem. Not that he had the honour of driving her; this was one he could seldom obtain; she would always take the ribbands into her own hands; and to say the truth, she was, I believe, the better whip of the two. Mr. Carberry could not wholly forbear remonstrating against the manner in which his son was going on; but he was always silenced with the Earl of Borrowdale's parliamentary interest; and the altercations which ensued, uniformly ended in his paying whatever sums were demanded of him, though at the same time each payment made, was accompanied with a protestation that it should be the last. Yet when another and another demand came, the thoughts of the borough, and of his son's coming into parliament through the Earl's interest, outweighed every other consideration, nor could he resolve to refuse the ad-

vances which that son represented as indispensably necessary for keeping up the connection.

The conclusion of their pleasant parties together was, that the scheme in which I had been disappointed they actually fulfilled; and just about the same time that Mr. and Mrs. Carberry and Katherine came up to town in September, the Countess Dowager, the young Earl, the two Lady Cliftons, the Honourable Mr. Molesworth Seymour, and Count Maurice, set off on a party to Paris. Maurice previous to his departure had delighted himself with the idea of the admiration which would be excited among the young men of ton at Paris by his knowing equipage; and not thinking the horses he already had to his tandem sufficiently superb, the very best pair that could be procured in London were ordered for the occasion. Lady Amanda was still to retain her seat as his companion; and the Countess Dowager's barouche, to which she had four very fine horses, was to convey the rest of the company, either within or without, as they should find themselves most disposed. Some debates occurred whether they should take a coachman with them or not, since the Earl and the Honourable Mr. Molesworth Seymour thought they should probably always take the ribbands; but at length it was determined that coachy

should go, rather as superintendant of the cavalry at their places of rest, than as their *conducteur* when they should be in motion.

Off they set then in solemn or rather mirthful procession for Dover. The tandem, with the Count and Lady Amanda, the latter as coachman, led the van; and the barouche, with the Countess Dowager and the Earl in the seat behind, the Honourable Mr. Molesworth Seymour and Lady Paulina on the box, and the maid, with the coachman, valet de chambres and groom in the inside, brought up the rear. But arrived on the coast, what a cruel disappointment awaited our count! — These horses, these fine horses bought expressly for the occasion, which were to excite such an extraordinary sensation at Paris, which were to be the astonishment of the Boulevards, the delight of all the Parisian *badauds*;—these horses, before which the celebrated horses of the Hippodrome, prancing before the chateau of the Thuilleries, were to hide their diminished heads;—these horses he learned, alas! could not accompany him across the Straits. The First Consul, the ruthless First Consul, insensible to the benefits which might have accrued to his fellow citizens from witnessing the progress made by the modern English in the noble science of coachmanship, had absolutely pro-

hibited the entrance of English horses into the French republic. Like the Stoic Plato, who viewed only with grief and indignation the progress made by the Grecian youth in the art of driving, which was the admiration of all the rest of his countrymen, the Consul actually thought there were other attainments in which it was more desirable to see the youths of modern Gallia excel. Or perhaps, and indeed this seems the more probable solution of the prohibition, he was envious of their talent; and as he was well aware that the native horses of his own country would not admit of their drivers *showing off* in the same way that the imported ones might, he had in a fit of mean jealousy issued the decree. Upon second thoughts, I am of opinion that this is the true solution of the matter, nor do I doubt that my fellow countrymen will entirely concur with me. Be this however as it may, the fact was, that these horses, to which Count Maurice had looked as the source of his fame and distinction in foreign lands, he found could never be exhibited there.

It was in vain that the Earl, the Honourable Mr. Molesworth Seymour, and the enamoured Count Maurice, blustered, damned the First Consul and the whole French republic, and swore that they would not set foot in it unless

their horses might go with them. Their imprecations were wasted in the empty air, they could not reach the ears of the First Consul, on whom alone they could have been lavished with any prospect of utility. The decree was fixed as the laws of the Medes and Persians, and would hardly have been suspended in their favour, even if the First Consul could have known that the country was in danger of losing such illustrious visitors in consequence of it. The horses might be embarked at Dover, their owners might have the pleasure of their company across the Straits, but further they could not go; their landing at Calais was out of the question, the orders were peremptory for the exclusion of English horses from the French republic.

What then was to be done?—The Earl and his honourable friend were decidedly for abandoning the scheme; they thought it very much beneath Englishmen to suffer themselves to be dictated to by any other power whatever, much more by an obscure little trumpery bit of a Corsican. They were sure there was nothing half so well worth seeing in all Paris as their equipages, and they would never condescend, no not they, to be dragged about by such wretched things as the animals that they called horses in France. Nay, they thought that this would be

but a proper punishment to the French for suffering such decrees to be made; for they were sure the loss would be entirely to them, not to themselves. They ought to rejoice that the English would on any terms condescend to come among them, and not to suppose that they would permit their dictating what they should and what they should not do. They had even a great mind to bribe the master of some vessel to steal by night to an obscure part of the coast, and put the horses ashore, and leave 'em there out of spite, and convince the First Consul that the English would land horses there if they chose it, whether they had his permission or not. To these sentiments Count Maurice lent a patient ear, but made no reply; how could he till Lady Amanda's sentiments were known? and the ladies were as yet ignorant of this unfortunate *embarras*.

When it was made known to them, they did not by any means coincide with the noble Earl and the honourable Commoner.—Pooh, what did it signify, they said, whether the horses might go or not?—They supposed they should find animals of some kind in France to drag them along; and since it was so much the fashion for people to go to Paris at that time, they should never know how to meet all their

fashionable acquaintance the ensuing winter if they had not been there. Still the Earl and the Honourable Mr. Molesworth Seymour were a little refractory; the latter in particular, as his great pleasure in going seemed to rest upon the idea of showing off his coachmanship there. A very pretty lover-like altercation ensued, therefore, between him and Lady Paulina, in which, among other tender things said on the gentleman's part, he politely told the lady that if she would go she might go by herself, for he'd no more be henpecked before marriage than after, and he had no notion of women taking upon themselves to determine what should or should not be done. To this her Ladyship replied with some animation, that she had as little notion of women being dictated to even by their husbands, much more by their lovers, and he might do as he pleased, to Paris she would go, whatever might be the consequence. Lady Amanda commended her sister's spirit, and declared she would do just the same if she ever should be placed in a similar situation; and if Mr. Molesworth Seymour did choose to break with her sister upon this account, every body would see that he only was to blame, nor would there be any fear of his place being supplied very shortly, perhaps by some much better match.

The Countess Dowager did not either wholly applaud or wholly condemn the sentiments expressed by her daughters. She was as well disposed to the Paris journey as they were; but the Honourable Mr. Molesworth Seymour, besides being an Earl's son, was rich,—which she thought a no less important consideration,—and she was not so fully assured as Lady Amanda, that in case of his vacating the situation he then held in the train of Lady Paulina, a successor would be very easily procured. She wisely, therefore, determined that the best course she could pursue was to endeavour to make peace between the contending parties; but it was soon obvious that, if peace was to be obtained, the concessions must be entirely on one side, and that the side on which, according to the most commonly received notions, concessions are the least to be expected. The lady would hear of nothing short of complete submission on the gentleman's part; and he at length was so much intimidated by the lofty tone and manner she assumed, that he surrendered at discretion.

"Well, well," he said, "if we must go then we must, but damn me if you shall ever catch me driving their horses!—No, no, that won't do neither. I'll only go upon condition that you never ask me to take the ribbands

into my hands again till I get back to England. I would not even attempt to drive a dog-cart with one of their horses."

This only condition required on the gentleman's part could not easily be refused; nor indeed did Lady Paulina feel any repugnance to granting it, since at all times, and under all circumstances, it was always her inclination rather, in every sense of the word, to drive him than to be driven by him. Count Maurice was then applied to, to know whether he could resolve to encounter the humiliation of being *devancé* by French cavalry only?—to which he politely replied, that he had no opinion of his own, he was wholly at the devotion of the ladies; and whatever they should do or where-ever they should go, he should be too happy in being permitted the honour of following them. The Earl himself was then the only one whose opinion on the prosecution or relinquishment of the scheme remained wavering; but finding that he should be left in a minority of one only, if the question should now be put to the vote, he determined on letting it pass quietly *nem. con.*, and said, that since it was the general opinion to continue the journey, he would not withhold his assent.

But there was still another difficulty to be arranged. The admission of English carriages

into the republic was not prohibited, though the admission of English horses was. At first, therefore, it was decided that the carriages should be embarked, notwithstanding that the horses must stay behind. But here the master of the hotel ventured to suggest, that it would be to little purpose for the gentleman to whom the tandem belonged to take that with him. He could assure them, he said, that the roads in France were in a very indifferent state, and it would be scarcely possible for a carriage of that light and frail construction to travel so many miles over them: besides, it would be very difficult to adapt the harness of the French post-horses to such a carriage: the gentlemen, he observed, did not seem aware of the great difference there was between a French *attelage de poste* and an English one. Even her ladyship's barouche was not of a construction which would suit very well the journey they were to undertake; the wheels in particular looked so slight, that they would soon be entirely worn out; and there being no perch, the travelling in it upon bad roads would be particularly hazardous.

"So then," said the Earl, rather nettled again, "I suppose we must not only be dragged by their damned horses, but ride in one of their damned carriages too?"

The landlord however replied, that this was not necessary, if his Lordship objected to it very much. "I have two very good English carriages," he said, "to dispose of for different persons, a coach and a postchaise, which would answer the purpose of your Lordship and the party extremely well, if you are disposed to take them. The coach has already been at Paris; it returned indeed not more than a fortnight since: the owner would have sold it on the other side of the water, but could not get the price he expected, so left it with me for sale. It is in extremely good condition, and the Countess's arms could be painted upon it in a very short time. The postchaise was left here by two gentlemen, who had it made particularly strong for the rough travelling which they had been told they might expect in France; but when they got here, they determined not to proceed on their proposed journey; so, instead of sailing to Calais, took a coasting vessel to Margate, and left their carriage for me to dispose of. It was never used but for their travelling from London hither."

After much discussion, though the party were not very willing to give up their carriages, which they expected were to cut a dash upon the continent, it was at length deter-

mined that thus it must be; and the purchase of the coach and postchaise being agreed for, the carriages with their new proprietors were all embarked at Dover. This event took place on the same day that poor Mrs. Carberry arrived first in town to consult her physicians.

CHAPTER IV.

Which those who do not wish to be rendered sad and serious had better not read.

THESE frolics of Count Maurice were not much calculated to improve the situation of Mrs. Carberry's health. If before the summer campaign she had felt uneasiness and alarms upon the course he was pursuing, for how much greater cause of alarm did this fresh career of follies and extravagance furnish occasion! Nor was she the only person who took this view of the matter. Mr. Fenton, who considered himself, from his many years' service, as privileged to speak his mind freely on all subjects in which his master's interests were essentially concerned, could not forbear expressing frequently, in pretty strong terms, his uneasiness at the manner in which things were going on, and observing how impossible it would be, even with Mr. Carberry's good fortune and extensive business, long to support such a waste of money. He said, he had ventured once to hint nearly as much to Mr. Carberry himself, and to suggest the propriety of his interposing authoritatively to put some restraint upon his son; but the only answer he could obtain from his master was, that he was

himself the best judge of these things, and was much more interested in the matter than any other person. He was sensible that he had many other ties upon him besides Maurice, and he would take care they should not be injured.

During their short stay in Chatham Place, in the month of September, I only saw Mrs. Carberry and Katherine once, and then with Mr. Carberry present, so that I had no conversation upon the subject with Mrs. Carberry. At their return in October, Maurice was still at Paris, playing off the *beau garçon*, and circulating the products of his father's wharfs very freely. I had by this time so far subdued my former feelings of embarrassment in Katherine's company, that I now saw her without much uneasiness and repugnance. It was not that I loved her less, my attachment became every day more and more deeply rooted as I had more opportunity of becoming acquainted with the unbounded excellence of her disposition; but I had schooled my heart into a more sober kind of attachment. Though still feeling that all other women, comparatively speaking, were objects of indifference to me, and that it would be utterly impossible for me ever to think of uniting myself to another, yet I considered an union with her as a thing so totally out of the question, that nothing remained but

to devote my life to rendering any services that might be in my power to her or her connections, restraining my ideas of recompense to the delight of thinking that I contributed to her good in any way, and to the hope of always enjoying such intercourse with the family, as would permit of my enjoying her company.

Confining myself to these ideas, or, if others would for awhile occasionally intrude, combating them with a chivalrous ardour, I thought no more of shunning her company. If I reproached myself with the weakness of which I had been guilty at Brighton, in being unable to speak to her when she visited me in my sick-room, and seemed to take an interest in my situation, I resolved that it should be the last time I had to make myself such reproaches, or permitted my feelings to interfere so as to render me either more or less attentive to her than our relative situations permitted or demanded. This was a hard task, yet one in which various subsequent testimonies convinced me that I succeeded for the most part very happily: even when in a few instances some slight deviations from this strict guard intervened, it was only on occasions that might justify expressions of enthusiasm even from an indifferent observer. But this is in some sort to anti-

cipate. I have, however, made these general observations here, to avoid a frequent recurrence to my feelings towards Katherine, and an explanation of a leading motive, by which my conduct for a certain portion of my life was governed. I could not help loving her; I had no reason to wish not to love her; but I wished if possible to divest my passion of every selfish consideration, to prove that it had no other object but the promotion of her happiness, putting my own out of the question; nor to make this sacrifice a matter of display and ostentation to the world, sufficient that it was known to myself, desirous only that no other person ever should be conscious of it.

The motives which had influenced Walter's eccentric conduct in a recent instance remained hitherto as much enveloped in a cloud as ever. I had some conversation with Mr. Shelburne upon the subject when a fair opportunity was once presented for its introduction; but he assured me that nothing had ever transpired to him which could solve the mystery: he was indeed very much inclined to suspect that Walter had himself given the genuine clue to it, when he ascribed the whole to caprice. It did appear to me, however, that though Walter still pursued his painting, it was with less ardour than at first; that there was evidently

something more than usually restless and unsettled about him; though, whether that was merely the effect of his well-known and uniform disposition, or whether it was to be ascribed to any particular cause then existing, it was impossible to determine. He was sometimes eager in his attentions to Margaret, as if still persuading himself that he was attached to her; sometimes his attentions seemed more directed to Katherine; but it was impossible to discern, amid this versatility, any thing which could lead to believing him seriously enamoured of either. It seemed to me much more a question, whether Katherine was not attached to him; I thought sometimes that her behaviour in his company was such as to justify the belief that she was so; but that, since it was an attachment which her judgement could not wholly approve, she sought to combat it as much as possible.

All these things, but most of all the situation of Mrs. Carberry's health, contributed to render the evenings in Chatham Place meetings of less hilarity than they had been the winter before. Yet Mrs. Carberry, while still able to bear society, as if conscious that a final separation from her friends was a thing to which she must look forward as fast approaching, and anxious to procure herself as much of that en-

joyment as could be crowded into so short a space, was extremely desirous of drawing those friends about her as much as possible.

Mr. Carberry's attachment to his wife had been so much founded on respect and esteem for the many amiable qualities of her mind and heart, that it was impossible he should not be sensibly affected with her situation; equally impossible was it that he should not be deeply distressed at the prospect of being deprived of one towards whom he always expressed himself as feeling unbounded gratitude for the happiness he had enjoyed in his union with her. Whatever could be effected by procuring her the best medical advice, was liberally done by him; and if it had been thought that change of air or climate could be beneficial to her, he declared himself ready to go to any part of the world that might be prescribed: but it was equally her own opinion, (deduced from her own feelings,) and that of the physicians, that it was not a case in which change of climate could be of any avail.

For three months after she came to London she continued in a fluctuating state, sometimes better, sometimes worse; but by that time the disorder had gained so much upon her, that she became unable to quit her chamber. Katherine's attentions to her were unwearied;

and though never perhaps was a daughter more devotedly attached to a mother, she did not suffer those morbid sensibilities in which women in general are apt to indulge, so far to overcome her, as to occasion one moment's interruption in them. The interval between the time when she was first confined to her chamber, and that which terminated at once her malady and her life, was occupied by many very interesting conversations between her and her angelic daughter;—conversations not at that time known to me, but which I have since had sufficient opportunities of being made fully acquainted with. I therefore give them their place here, where they come in most properly, in order to form a connected narrative.

"My Katherine," she said, "I know it is impossible I should continue much longer among you, it is an awful change that I am about to experience; but thanks to the great Ruler of the Universe, I hope I shall not meet it wholly unprepared; I have endeavoured to discharge my duties faithfully in every situation of life in which I have been placed; and if they have been at last but imperfectly performed, he who reads the heart knows how much it has been my wish to act rightly, and my endeavours I trust will be accepted by him.

"That my life has been free from errors, it were the height of arrogance and presumption

to assume; all I hope is, that it has been free from great transgressions. Even in the act of my life in which I have always found the greatest subject of repentance, I can truly say that my motives were pure, though I soon became sensible that I had erred greatly in judgement. You will perceive, Katherine, to what I allude. It is not long since I confided to you the story of my marriage with your poor father, and of your uncle Bernard's with my beloved friend Sophia. The whole of that affair was a series of misunderstandings which led to very unfortunate results; and I feel that I was, through the mistaken notions I had long cherished, in great measure the cause of them. Oh, my Katherine! let me earnestly recommend to you never to marry upon the principle which led me to give my hand to your father! —Marriages merely of love, when not sanctioned by prudence, are justly censurable; and far be it from me to recommend you to throw yourself into the arms of a man, however strongly your heart may be interested by him, unless prudence sanction the choice! But from experience I know, that a marriage contracted without strong inclination never can produce positive, hardly even negative, happiness. Mr. Middleton was, I can truly say, a most excellent husband. I cannot urge a single fault in his conduct towards me; but the duties of a wife,

a mother, a mistress of a family, are arduous duties to perform, and require to be smoothed by the warmest affection towards the man for whose sake they are undertaken.

"Perhaps these ideas may appear romantic, rather those of fifteen than of near fifty; but I urge them to you, Katherine, because I have myself felt too powerfully their truth and force, and I shudder at the thoughts of a darling child ever experiencing what I have myself experienced. The marriage state is one into which both sexes are apt to enter too lightly; they do not consider the nature of such a connection and the arduous duties attached to it; they are only awakened to a sense of these things by severe disappointment,—by finding a state, in which the warmth of their imaginations represented to them nothing but unclouded happiness, attended with its concomitant portion of cares and troubles. Over these cares love may throw a veil which will lighten them to both parties;—without love, they will appear through a glass which magnifies them tenfold. It is not enough then that reason and judgement approve the man to whom the hand is given; their approbation is indeed indispensable; but the heart must also be consulted, if the happiness is to be complete. Reason and judgement both pleaded to me in favour of your father, or I would not, even to purchase,

as I hoped, the happiness of a beloved brother and friend, have yielded to his suit; but I too soon found, that though they were the most solid foundation on which the fabric of happiness could be built, other materials were requisite for forming a complete superstructure.

"Women are educated far too much with the idea that they have but one object in view, and that is, to be married; and the means they are taught to practise for attaining that object, are to seek those exterior accomplishments, and those only, by which the fancies of young men are captivated. Neither party think, during the time of courtship, of any thing further than to please, and to be pleased. It never enters into their consideration, that when these sources of pleasing become familiar, they cease to please; but this once discovered, disappointment and ill-humour ensue, and there is an end of all happiness. I have endeavoured, my Katherine, to educate you with different notions; to instil into your mind the full conviction, that if a married life may under auspicious circumstances be far happier than a single one, (and this is a truth which I believe few persons will be found hardy enough to deny, since it seems to be the state pointed out to us by nature itself, and wisely ordained by the great Lord of nature for the purpose of promoting virtue and happiness among us;)—if therefore,

under auspicious circumstances, it is decidedly happier than a single life, under inauspicious ones it is certainly much more unhappy. Wedded wretchedness, whatever form it may assume, must be incomparably more difficult to support with resignation and equanimity than single. If it proceed from an ill-assorted union, it is inconceivably aggravated by the reflection, that he or she who ought to be our comforter under affliction is the cause of it. If it proceed from extraneous causes which fall alike on both, under which both suffer equally, the affliction must be doubly felt, in seeing the person whose happiness we would give our lives to promote, an equal sufferer with ourselves. It has been my endeavour, therefore, my Katherine, far from instilling into your mind the idea that a woman must at all events be married, it matters little how, to impress you with the conviction, that unless the union proposed be such as to afford every fair and reasonable prospect of wedded happiness, she had far better not be married at all. If a good wife and mother be one of the most valuable characters that society can boast, (and I am very decidedly of opinion that she is so,) a single woman is not without sufficient and ample opportunities of making herself useful in society. She has far greater opportunities of being so, than one who, from being

unhappily married, cannot duly perform the duties to which by her situation she is called. Again, therefore, my dearest daughter, I earnestly exhort you to consider well before you bind yourself irrevocably in any matrimonial connection, and much rather to reconcile yourself to the idea of passing your whole life, unwedded, than to marry unless your choice is equally sanctioned both by your heart and judgement.

"In being thus early separated from you, my Katherine, it is a great source of consolation that I leave you under the protection of a father-in law, who loves you as affectionately as if you were his own child; who has treated you, ever since my marriage with him, as if he had been your own father; and who has repeatedly assured me, that whatever might befal me he should never consider you in any other light. One only alloy do I feel to the consolation which this reflection affords, and that is in the weakness of his conduct (for in no other light can I view it) with regard to his eldest son. Ah, my child, I shudder when I think what may be the ultimate consequence of this weakness; it may even involve in it the ruin of himself, of you, of the son towards whom this weakness is shown, and of our two poor infants. Katherine, I know I need not say to you, 'Be a mother to them; extend to

them the same maternal cares which I have always endeavoured to fulfil to the best of my ability, which it would have been my delight longer to have extended to them.' I know that without my recommendation you would endeavour to supply my place; your conduct as a sister, while they had still a mother's tenderness to look to, has been marked with such kindness and affection, that under your care I am convinced the loss of a mother will hardly be felt by them. But if my alarms should in any respect be realised, your task in being still a mother to them, will be a hard one indeed. Yet, surely, Katherine, you will not shrink from it!—I am sure you will not!—it were criminal in me even for one moment to admit a thought that you could do so. Their ages are yet too tender to permit any solid judgement of their dispositions to be formed; yet I would fain flatter myself that there is reason to think their tempers such as could be wished. Cherish then, my dear child, these favourable symptoms, and anxiously correct any appearance of deviations from them. Above all, let the uncertainty of every thing human be deeply impressed on their minds, with a firm confidence in the ultimate tendency of every thing to good, under the superintendence of an all-wise, all-merciful Being. Then, if

they are to experience any great reverse of fortune, or other earthly trials, they will, I hope, meet them with fortitude, piety and resignation.

"I have no doubt that, when I am gone, you will be placed, my Katherine, by your father-in-law, at the head of his house, and that the whole care of the family will be intrusted to your management. This will be a great charge at your age; but I have perfect confidence that it will be performed so as to merit and receive his thanks and applause. I am so sure that you will acquit yourself well, that I feel no necessity of giving you any new instructions; it is sufficient to recommend to your constant attention, all that have hitherto been given. While I was with your dear uncle at Langham during his illness, and the temporary management of the house devolved upon you, Mr. Carberry was so much pleased with your conduct, that I have every reason to be satisfied with the legacy I shall leave him to supply my place."

In strains like these did this excellent and anxious mother often pour out her heart to her beloved daughter, as long as her declining strength would permit of such exertions. But for a few days before her death she was too much exhausted to be able to utter her feelings. Yet still the mute expression with which

she sometimes pressed her daughter's hand, and cast her dying eyes upon her, spoke with almost more than mortal eloquence. Mr. Carberry was not of a disposition to give vent to his feelings on this melancholy occasion by a flow of words; but the evident depression of his mind, and his anxious attendance upon her, explained them very fully. At length, when, after long protracted sufferings, she expired in the arms of himself and his daughter-in-law, their mutual sorrow did not break out in those vehement expressions, which are commonly rather adopted to conceal a want of feeling, than proofs of an excess of it; the deep impression which this irreparable loss made upon their minds was to be read in every look, in every action, though the repetition of it was never to be heard from their lips. And indeed it was no common loss they sustained. Mr. Carberry was often heard to declare during her life, that there was not a single action of hers since they had lived together that he wished otherwise; that not a single word had ever escaped her he could have wished unsaid. A tribute to this effect he bore to her memory in an elegant monument, which he put up in his parish church: but it was the last time that he was able to express himself to that effect; the mention of her name was too affecting to be

ever from that time uttered by him. The last occasion upon which I ever heard him even make any allusion to her, was when, two days after her death, he sent for me, and taking my hand said, "Samuel, she loved you, you must . . . ." the rest he could not utter; but I understood he meant that I must attend her to the grave.—I was as little able to speak as himself, and after remaining with him a few minutes he waved me to retire.

With the purchase of New Lodge, Mr. Carberry had purchased the permission to construct a vault in Woodville church, the parish in which the Lodge was situated, as a burial-place for his family, little thinking that the body of his esteemed and beloved wife was in less than two years to be deposited there. It was hither that I attended the funeral, Mr. Shelburne and Walter also attending, and I do not know that I ever passed a moment of greater agony. I cannot describe my feeling when, the coffin being carried into the vault, all connection with one whom I had so much reason to love and revere seemed closed for ever. This is, I think, the most heart-rending moment in the loss of a friend, even more so than the sigh with which the last spark of life is extinguished. While the body yet remains among us, all ties between that and the survivors seem

not quite dissolved; but the earth once closed upon the remains, nothing but a dreary void is left, to which length of time alone can in any degree reconcile the mind. Such were my feelings for a long time after, whenever I visited in Chatham Place. How much more cruelly, then, must they have been experienced by those more nearly connected with the cherished object whose absence made this vacuum!

Walter, through the whole of his aunt's illness, had been most feelingly attentive to the family, and seemed only to deplore that the case was of such a nature as scarcely to permit of his assiduities being of any avail. He wrote daily to his father during the last fortnight, when almost every day the closing stroke of this melancholy scene might be expected, and all his letters breathed the strongest, deepest sense of his aunt's worth, and the loss that the family would sustain in her; nor did he ever mention her to me but in similar terms, expressing with the utmost warmth his sympathy both for his uncle and Katherine. Yet methought, amid all this feeling, and which I was well assured was not dissembled, there was something in his whole manner and appearance not altogether like the same Walter whom I had been accustomed to see. There was an air of restraint about him very unlike that per-

fect frankness which assured me that his heart was always laid open to me; that, if I could have explored its inmost recesses, nothing would have been found there but what was freely communicated through the organs of his tongue. Yet why I thought this I could hardly tell; his expressions of friendship to me were as warm as ever; and if I saw less of him than when we used to be fellow inhabitants together of the parish of Langham, there was a very sufficient cause for such a change; we had our respective serious occupations, which must necessarily be attended to; we had not the same leisure to spend in those amusements which we had always delighted to participate together.

CHAPTER V.

A philosophical dissertation upon a leading feature in the human character.—Different ideas of authors and readers.—Tender conversations between lovers.—Various motives for travelling.—The proper mode of forming the character of a legislator.—A consolatory epistle, and the answer to it.

FROM these death-bed scenes it is now proper to advert to others of a more gay and lively nature. And yet perhaps the latter will be found not untinctured with a certain shade of melancholy, from the images presented of the consequences to which they must probably lead.

The reader will recollect, or if he does not I do, for authors have generally better memories than their readers, that we separated ourselves only a few pages back from the illustrious travellers, in whose delicate distresses at Dover I have no doubt he sincerely sympathized, but which being happily surmounted, the party were actually embarked for Calais. Their passage was fortunate, the wind was favourable, and in three hours the swelling canvass bore them into the harbour of that celebrated *Key of France*, as it was proudly called while under the British dominion.

If I were possessed with the ambition of extending this piece of true biography to five or six volumes instead of four,—an ambition which I freely own has not always been a stranger to my mind, titillating as it is to that sentiment called by the French *amour-propre* to talk of oneself,—and that a certain portion of this sentiment resides somewhere in the interior of every individual of the human race is an incontrovertible fact, although divines, anatomists, and metaphysicians, the three classes of mankind who search the most minutely into these things, are undecided whether its proper residence be in the brain or heart.....This is, however, a question of small importance,.... that it does reside somewhere in the interior of every mortal who inhabits this sublunary globe, whether male or female, every body's neighbour knows perfectly well, though perhaps he is not always conscious of it himself. But this amounts to pretty much the same thing as if the consciousness were in ourselves; for, since we all know that our neighbour has a certain quantity laid up in his storehouse, he equally knows that it is to be found in ours; so that on that score we are even. Its being the appanage of the whole human race is then a fact incontrovertibly established even by the concurrent testimony of the race itself; but it is a no less certain fact, that the measure of it, like the measure of

most things in this world, whether good or bad, is not dealt in equal portions to all. Some are so richly gifted, possessing even such a superfluity, that it is impossible to be many minutes in their society without perceiving it ooze out at some corner, perhaps at many corners, while others have merely a little reserve carefully folded up and guarded in some obscure niche, only to be brought forward upon very extraordinary occasions,—and such, I can assure the reader, is my own case.—But bless me! whither am I running?—I protest I have involved myself in such a maze, that though my train of ideas is very distinct and clear to my own mind, I am not sure it will be equally so to my readers; therefore I think it high time to break off, and revert to the spot whence I set out.

Well, then, I was going to say that it is so extremely titillating to our *amour-propre*, whether our stock of it be great or small, to talk of and write of ourselves, that I will own I have sometimes had it in contemplation, whether I should not enlarge the pleasure I am now procuring myself in this way, by extending my work to six or seven volumes, instead of confining it to four. In that case I should here have an excellent opportunity for extension, by relating at large the adventures of the Earl of Borrowdale and his party after they

landed upon the French territory, illustrating and ornamenting the narration (in order that *self* might still have the proper share in it) with comparisons between what they did, and what *I* would have done, had my continental tour ever been extended so far as to the other side of the British Channel. All this might have been done; but one of the sage observations I have made in my passage through life is, that authors and readers are not always *tout-à-fait d'accord*, as to the length to which the one may extend what the other is destined to peruse; and while the author thinks himself so amusing that he can never give his readers too much, the reader, on the contrary, finds him so dull, that ere half the first volume is travelled over he begins to yawn, and before the end is laid fast asleep; so that the remaining volumes stand a fair chance of not being read at all. This being a frequent state of the case between the author and his readers, I think it, upon the whole, better not to exceed four volumes, lest, in seeking an immoderate share of gratification to my *amour-propre*, I should in its place find mortification; and I would rather take leave of the public with a wish on their part that there had been four more volumes, than run the hazard of any one throwing the work down with a sneer, observing,

that they have waded through it at last; but indeed Mr. Danville has done like too many authors, and not been aware of the point at which it would have been expedient for him to stop.

Impressed then with a deep feeling of this important truth, I shall restrain myself from dilating too far upon the inferior personages of my work, (I beg pardon of my honourable and right honourable friends, for calling them the *inferior* personages,) and pass rapidly over their adventures, giving only so much of them as is necessary to elucidate those leading events in my own life, which have led to the crisis at which I purpose to conclude my narrative.

Notwithstanding that Lady Paulina had carried her swain in triumph across the Straits of Dover, spite of his reluctance to the idea of being drawn by republican horses, nay, had even soothed him into a sort of complacency during the voyage, and extorted a confession that they should have looked extremely foolish, after having gone so far, if they had been deterred from proceeding by such trifles;—notwithstanding all this, when the superb *attelage* of the French *chevaux de poste* first met the eyes of the Honourable Mr. Molesworth Seymour, another smart contest was to be sustained before he could be prevailed upon to ascend

a carriage to which they were attached. He insisted that the jack-boots at least should be laid aside, for there could be no possible pretence for the postillions riding in such d—d things. As to the harness, it was indeed scarcely possible for that to be amended by any measures that could be taken within a reasonable time; but the same could not be said of the boots, and he positively would not get into the carriage till they were taken off.

The postillions professed with all due humility their vast desire to *plaire à un Lord tel que Monsieur*; but as to going without them, that was a thing perfectly impossible; they should be *hué*, *bafoué*, by all the postillions on the road, and *Milord* was certainly *trop honnête* to think of such a thing; or, if *Milord* was inexorable, they must *supplier les belles dames* to plead for them; and if they would be so good as to interpose, *Milord* could have nothing more to say. This appeal had the desired effect. Lady Paulina, impatient to proceed, told her lover in very few words, that they could not be kept waiting there all day by his nonsense; he had much better go back to England if he could not conform his ideas to other countries: for her part, she admired the jack-boots of all things, and should insist, when they were married, upon their postillions always

riding in them. The grateful postillions made many acknowledgements to the *belle dame* for her intercessions, or rather peremptory mandates, in their behalf, observing that they were sure she must be *aussi bonne qu'elle étoit belle*; a compliment which her ladyship was not displeased to hear, though from a postillion, and which confirmed her more strongly in the authoritative tone she had assumed. Her humble slave therefore, no longer making any attempts at resistance, first handed her into the coach, and then followed himself.

That her ladyship should be so much more eager to proceed on the journey than her honourable admirer, will not appear very surprising, when the different motives by which they were actuated in taking it are duly weighed. The object of the latter was merely to do honour to the respectable club of which he was a member, the *four-in hand*, by appearing at Paris with an equipage suitable to the station he held as one of its earliest members; and disappointed in this purpose, he was become not merely indifferent, but rather averse to the prosecuting it. Lady Paulina's object, on the contrary, was to get to Paris at any rate as speedily as possible; and rather than not do so, she would even have worn the jack-boots herself.

Besides the general motive of wishing to follow a fashion so prevalent as the making an excursion to Paris was at this moment, she had a particular wish that it should be accomplished with the least possible delay. Among the vast number of English, both great and little, at this time visiting the French capital, none were more distinguished than the Duchess of Avondale and her elegant daughter the Lady Jeannette, the only one of six who remained unmarried. For many reasons an acquaintance with her grace had long been an object of the ardent wishes of Lady Paulina and Lady Amanda. In the first place, she was at that time one of the principal leaders of the ton in the great city of London, and to be of her circle was thought to give a particular *éclat* to all who were so honoured. But there was a talent in which she was well known to excel all her competitors so much, that her acquaintance was beyond measure desirable to single ladies of rank: this was an indescribable address in what is vulgarly called match-making. She was indeed so great an adept in it, that in one instance only did she ever fail of accomplishing any match on which she had fixed her mind: an obstinate young man of rank, for whom she had provided a most excellent one, could never be brought to

pronounce the single monosyllable of assent to her wishes, which would have rendered him happy for life.

Now, this talent having been employed to the advantage of her own daughters with such brilliant success that of six one only remained unmarried, and she was the destined wife of a peer of very high rank recently come to his title, it was impossible that it should not be the subject of universal admiration, and excite something like envy in the breasts of other young ladies whose mothers were not endowed with equal talents. But since her grace would now have no further employment in catering for her own family, it was a commonly-received opinion, that rather than let her talents lie dormant, she would kindly exercise them on the behalf of others: her acquaintance therefore became doubly desirable, and a sort of competition arose among the young ladies of the *beau-monde* as to who should be the favoured objects taken under her protection. Into this competition the Lady Cliftons were very desirous of being admitted. By experience they had found the Countess Dowager their mother very defective in the talent which her grace of Avondale possessed so eminently; since, though they were now arrived at the respective ages of twenty-eight and thirty, according to the testi-

mony of the parish-register, twenty-two and twenty-three according to their own calculation, and less they could not be, since they were known to be older than their brother, and he was of age ;—but being arrived at these ages, and the Countess not having been able to do more for them, or they for themselves, than to enlist the Honourable Mr. Molesworth Seymour as a suitor, they thought it would be vastly agreeable, and vastly convenient, if they could procure a little instruction from the Duchess, or perhaps even get her to take the matter entirely into her own hands.

That Lady Paulina was already encumbered with an engagement, was no obstacle to any plan of the kind. Her ladyship and her honourable lover had already had more than one *tiff*, she had only accepted his services as thinking him better than nobody; and since he did not show any great eagerness to bring matters to a conclusion, she thought there was no occasion to entertain nice scruples about breaking with him in the case of any thing more eligible being proposed. And as to the Duchess herself, it was well known that she had an elevation of sentiment far above that childish squeamishness which hesitates, when convenience suits, to break off one match and substitute another in its place :—had not her mind been

superior to such scruples, she had never herself been Duchess of Avondale, nor one of her daughters Duchess of Huntingdon.

But all the advances made on the side of the Countess of Borrowdale and her daughters had hitherto been ineffectual to procure them the honour of her grace's acquaintance. There was indeed rather an awkward circumstance attached to the history of these ladies, which occasioned a backwardness in many persons as to making an acquaintance with them. Though it was very clear, that at the time of the Earl of Borrowdale's birth his mother was a legitimate countess, her hand having been to a certainty united to that of her husband full two months before, it was not equally clear that the young ladies were born in lawful wedlock. Indeed the very circumstance of the marriage so short a time before the Earl's birth seemed to place the matter out of doubt. The Countess herself, however, always asserted that she had then in fact been married many years; and indeed she had long borne the title of Countess. The reason, she said, of the ceremony being performed again was, a discovery made by her husband that from some unaccountable negligence the first marriage had never been registered.

Be this as it may, the Duchess of Avondale

had been uniformly shy of them; not perhaps but that, if their acquaintance could have been rendered in any way useful to herself, she would candidly have overlooked a circumstance of so very trivial a nature. The truth was, that, the Earl of Borrowdale being neither a duke nor a marquis, and she being determined that her daughters should be duchesses and marchionesses, there was no adequate end to answer in meeting the Countess's advances. Besides, the Earl being till very lately a minor, so that in an affair of matrimony there would have been troublesome guardians to consult, who would perhaps have thrown obstacles in the way of such a settlement being made as she thought a duchess's daughter had a right to require; he was equally on this ground not an object worthy of her grace's attention. For all these reasons, how much soever courted by the Countess and her daughters, she had uniformly kept aloof from their acquaintance.

This daily grew more and more matter of regret to Lady Paulina and Lady Amanda, as well as to the Countess herself. But Lady Paulina, having read in an elegant modern poem, that in foreign lands

. . . . with a brother's warmth, a brother's smile,
The stranger greets each native of his isle,

could not help flattering herself, that the

Duchess might in the *warm* French capital be inspired with a portion of that *warmth* in which she had been so much wanting in the *cold* English one; and that they might be greeted by her grace, when between two and three hundred miles from her own country, with that *sister's warmth*, with those *sisterly smiles*, which they had courted from her in vain at home.

These considerations rendering her ladyship peculiarly eager, not only for the journey, but for its being prosecuted with all possible celerity, it was not surprising that she should be peremptory with her lover; and as the latter was somewhat in awe of her, it was not less natural that he should at length, though reluctantly, seat himself by her side in the coach. The other two places in this vehicle were occupied by the Countess Dowager and the maid: the Earl, Lady Amanda, and Count Maurice, had from the commencement of the altercation been seated in the post-chaise. This latter was considered as Maurice's carriage, he having immediately on its being mentioned professed his readiness to purchase it, and having included the purchase-money in a large draft which he drew upon his father, as his last act before crossing the Channel. In consequence of the money for this, which was by far the

most expensive purchase of the two, being paid down, *mine host* at Dover graciously condescended to give the Countess credit for the coach till her return.

Arrived at Paris, the party dashed away, and spent their money at as great a rate as any of the numerous *Milords* their fellow-countrymen collected in the place. They had superb apartments in the Hôtel de Courlande, Place de la Concorde, one of the best and most expensive in Paris; they had the smartest *voitures* and *chevaux de remise* that were to be procured, and were among the most elegantly dressed of all the British belles at the most fashionable places of public resort. For all these things they found it very convenient to make Maurice *temporary* paymaster, for so they professed it to be, saying that they could settle accounts all at once at their return, and trusting that Maurice would not leave them in a French prison, though they were so much in his debt: indeed they did not know whether that might not be his wisest way, for they found so many things to tempt them to spend money, that they should be quite ruined before they could get away. By this affected facetiousness did they varnish over the really encroaching manner in which they were practising upon Maurice's folly and credulity.

But in one of the principal objects for which the jaunt was undertaken they were exceedingly disappointed: they found the Duchess of Avondale as inaccessible to them in Paris as in London. The fact was, that her grace, as well as themselves, was much more disposed to take into her friendship those who could be useful to her than those to whom she could be useful. They found, too, that their charms did not appear to make a deeper impression upon the hearts of the *Messieurs* on one side of the Channel, than on those of the Honourables and Right Honourables on the other. After having, therefore, tried their fortune in vain for four months in the French capital, they thought there was but one experiment more to make, whether *i cuori dei Signori Italiani* might not be made of more penetrable materials, and proposed spending the winter at Rome.

This proved the *coup de grace* with the Honourable Mr. Molesworth Seymour. He had borne the long protracted stay at Paris with no small degree of impatience: there was not a single thing in the whole city, he frequently declared, with which a man of sense could be amused. As to their horses and carriages, the d—l might drive them for him; he was sure nobody should ever catch him holding the ribbands to such animals. And as to hunting, he

had often heard a great deal of talk about the First Consul's going out hunting, but he had never seen any body in a hunting-dress since he had been in Paris: nay more, he went one day into a shop and asked for a *fouet de la chasse*, which meant a hunting-whip as plain as any body could speak, but the blockheads did not seem to have the least idea what he meant. On the whole, he said the rest of the party might please themselves, and go to Rome if they had a fancy to it, but for his part he should return to England, where he could enjoy himself; he had no notion of staying in such stupid black-guard countries. They might talk about Rome as they pleased, but he did not know that he should be a bit better amused there, and at any rate he was resolved not to try. Lady Paulina declared herself as firmly resolved to try, provided Mamma's consent could be obtained; observing to her honourable lover, that if he could not show more politeness before marriage, there was no great reason to expect different behaviour after:—she was therefore decidedly of opinion that it was better for all connection between them to cease at once. If he would not condescend to accompany them, she had no doubt but Mr. Carberry, who she must say was infinitely more of a gentleman than himself, was too well bred to think of deserting

a party which was made for their general amusement, and where each ought to be ready to oblige the other:—this, translated into plain English, meant that they should all be ready to oblige her ladyship.

Though the Countess did not absolutely wish the match with Mr. Molesworth Seymour to be broken off while there was no other in view for her daughter, she had yet for some time been much cooled in her original eagerness to promote it, by perceiving that he seemed in no hurry to bring matters to a conclusion, and by finding him not so ready to part with his money in presents to his future bride and her family, as she thought the connection required. He appeared, too, to the greater disadvantage when contrasted with Maurice, who, though only cherishing a very distant hope of a future bride, yet parted with his money, or with his father's at least, as freely as they could wish. These things considered, it appeared as if it was now the better speculation of the two to keep up the connection with Maurice, and, since he seemed disposed to maintain herself and her daughters for some time longer, not to do any thing which might check him: that it was expedient, therefore, to let her daughters pursue their idea of extending their tour further, since that would keep him more entirely in their power, and take the chance

of its being the means of making a final quarrel with Mr. Molesworth Seymour. The thing she was most afraid of in this case was, lest he in pique should say something to Maurice in the intention of putting him upon his guard: yet, if this should be done, she thought she might be satisfied that the latter was too much eaten up with his vanity and folly to be influenced by it. She therefore declared, that though she should be extremely sorry to see the party separated by a quarrel among them; yet, as there did not appear any thing unreasonable in her daughters' wishes of going to Italy, she should not oppose them, but, on the contrary, readily concur in the scheme: they knew very well that she was always happy when it was in her power to contribute to their enjoyment in a reasonable way.

After much altercation, then, and some upbraidings both on the part of the Honourable Mr. Molesworth Seymour and his incensed fair, which had in them more of the *countercheck quarrelsome* than the *retort courteous*, the gentleman concluded in a manner certainly not very polite from the son of an earl to the daughter of an earl. He called her a — —, (excuse, reader, my repeating the two very unbecoming words,)—and said she might go her own way, he never would have any thing more to say to her, but would return and enjoy him-

self in England, taking care that all his friends should know what a vixen she was, that they might not be taken in by her as he had been. Her ladyship, on the other hand, with little less courtesy replied, that she was very glad to be rid of such a dolt, who had no desire of improving himself by travel, and had done nothing but contradict her from the very beginning of the connection, nor ever made her a single present worth mentioning.

Thus separated these two tender lovers. The Honourable Mr. Molesworth Seymour immediately commenced the necessary preparations for his return to England; and the lady, in concert with the rest of the party, commenced theirs to proceed to Italy. Had it not been for this little cassation of so tender a connection, it is possible that some of the particulars here given of the Borrowdale and Seymour continental tour might never have been made public. But the *honourable* lover, faithful to his word given as the son of a peer, did not fail at his return to circulate freely, without disguise or circumlocution, any particulars which he thought might justify his desertion of his fellow travellers, by throwing reflections upon them: he seemed not to discover that in exposing them he was doing the same by himself.

It was now the beginning of December; and

as the ceremonials which take place in the celebration of Christmas at Rome are universally agreed to be highly deserving the attention of travellers, it was determined that the party should get there by that time; and they set out accordingly. By way of consolation then to Mr. Carberry in his great affliction for the loss of his wife, not many days after her funeral he received a letter from his son, announcing the new scheme in which he was engaged. He had no doubt, he said, of its meeting his father's entire approbation, since nothing could be more advantageous than for one who was destined to be a legislator in his own country, to obtain a competent knowledge of other countries; and this knowledge was only to be effectually obtained by a personal acquaintance with them. He was therefore confident that he should experience the same liberality from him that he had done hitherto, and that the draughts which he should still find it necessary occasionally to draw upon him, would as usual be duly answered.

It was now that Mr. Carberry was first seriously roused to a sense of his son's follies and extravagancies. He had invariably, as I have more than once had occasion to mention, shown me, even from my very first introduction to him, the greatest kindness; he seemed really

to have an esteem and regard for me; and this, which had been a constantly increasing sentiment even before the loss of his excellent wife, was much more evidently so afterwards. He was so desirous of having me with him, that he would frequently send for me in the morning when he really had nothing of any consequence to say, nor was ever easy if I was absent from Chatham Place a single evening; so that the increased salary which he gave me at Christmas, as clerk in his counting-house, seemed now much rather a stipend for reading the newspapers to him,—and this I often did in the morning as well as the evening.—But since it was in conformity with his wishes, not from any idle dispositions of my own, that the business it was my province to go through at the counting-house was not attended to as regularly as it ought to have been, I could not make myself any reproaches on that account. It was a sufficient reply on my part, if sometimes Mr. Fenton gave me a hint upon the subject, to say that I was really called away by Mr. Carberry himself; indeed I have not unfrequently sat up at night to repair the neglects of the day.

It was in consequence of the habit adopted by Mr. Carberry, of having me almost con-

stantly with him, that I was present when he received this letter from Maurice, and witnessed the effect it had upon him. "Look here," said he, putting it into my hand, "what is to be done?—can I continue to see nothing in all this but the wildness and giddiness of youth, which, suffered to run its career awhile, will then pass away and all will be well?—Samuel, I have tried to persuade myself that it was no more, but is it possible still to think so? No: too certainly he is suffering himself to be made the dupe of artful people, whose only object is to amuse themselves at his expense, under every sense which that expression will bear."

I confess that I thought he here took a much more reasonable and just view of the matter than he had ever done before; but it was not a subject on which I could put in a word,—and I read the letter, but made no remarks upon it. "What is to be said in reply to such a letter?" continued the merchant. "At a distance as he is, in a foreign country, how can I refuse him at least such supplies as shall bring him home? and if I promise to answer his demands, what curb is to be put upon such idle waste and profusion?—But why do I say this to any one?—who can put in a word upon such an occasion? Whatever is done, it must be purely

my own act and deed."—He said no more, but seemed so lost in thought, that he hardly, from that moment, knew what I was reading, though I was upon his favourite theme, a long debate in the House of Commons. For the first time in his life, at least I verily believe it was so, he suffered the debate to be read from beginning to end, without making a single commentary upon it, and, even when it was done, said nothing more than "Thank you, Samuel, I shall see you again in the evening." This seemed a hint for me to be gone, and I retired.

The result of his deliberations was, that he wrote a very affecting letter to Maurice, a copy of which I have now in my possession, though at the time I did not know any thing more than what is related above;—I knew only of this letter some time after. To me he did not mention the subject again, till subsequent events occasioned it to be renewed. The tenor of his answer was representing in very affecting terms, to his son, the state of affliction in which his letter found him, accompanied with some gentle remonstrances upon the unkindness of his conduct; that knowing, as he did, the declining state of Mrs. Carberry's health, he should, instead of returning to contribute to the consolation of an afflicted father,

choose that moment to ramble about the world on schemes of gaiety and dissipation, without even so much as asking his previous consent and approbation. As to his approving the scheme, he freely owned he could not do so; it was true that a knowledge of foreign countries, of their government, their laws, their jurisprudence, was a thing very desirable for one who was, as he hoped to be, in future, a legislator of his own; but it did not appear to him that the manner in which he was travelling, and the party of whose society he was a member, could lead to his attaining any of these objects. He could not therefore approve of his staying longer on the continent, unless it should be in a situation and among persons who could be really useful to him; nor would he be answerable for more money than was requisite merely to bring him back to England as speedily as possible.

So far was well; nor could it be denied that this was the style in which it was proper for him to write. But if I had known of it, I should not have expected it to lead to any good results. As to Maurice's obeying the summons to return, I should have considered that as wholly out of the question, if he or his companions were disposed to stay longer abroad. As little should I have had any expectation, in

case of Maurice's disregarding the contents of the letter, and continuing to make the usual large demands upon his father's purse, that the latter would yet have resolution to withstand them. How far this would have been to form an accurate judgement of the characters of both father and son, will appear in the sequel.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

CHAPTER VI.

Renewed causes produce increased effects.—An odd encounter in a morning ramble.—Astonishment carried to nearly its highest possible point.—A clergyman disappointed of a job, and a job made for a surgeon.

It was stated, when Mr. Carberry was originally introduced upon the scene, that he had been so much afflicted at the loss of his first wife, as to have lived nearly in a state of seclusion, till, by an extraordinary combination of circumstances, Eleanor had been thrown in his way; when soon becoming strongly attached to her, he was induced to re-enter the marriage state. By this means he was drawn very much out from his seclusion, and induced to mingle again somewhat with the world. The loss of Eleanor, whom he certainly had not loved less than his first wife, had a similar effect upon him. From that time he could no longer endure the society of mere acquaintance; every connection, except those nearest his heart, was entirely shunned by him; he would see no persons unless on matters of business, but the Shelburne family, his nephew Walter, and myself. He was happy to assemble as many of this party together in

an evening as he could; but it was impossible to prevail on him to admit any other company, and equally impossible to persuade him to vary the scene, by sometimes going to Mr. Shelburne's house, instead of the family from thence coming to Chatham Place.

To Katherine were consigned, as her mother expected, the care and management of the house; and she followed so exactly the course pursued by her, that, as far as the household œconomy was concerned, it could scarcely have been known that any change had been experienced. A still more admirable feature in her character was, that though still so young, (for she was not yet quite twenty,) she never seemed for one moment to repine at the secluded mode of life now adopted by her father, nor ever quitted him a single evening during the whole time they remained in London, not even to go to her uncle's. She saw that his only source of consolation was in the society to which he confined himself; and, as far as she was concerned, she was determined that this consolation should never be wanting to him. Her tenderest care was extended to her little brother and sister; they were her constant companions, and she was their only instructor, excepting that, as Edward continued his applications to me to hear and applaud the progress he made, a few

hints of instruction were on these occasions sometimes added by me. Before Mrs. Carberry's death, his father had talked of sending him to school: but he seemed now to have so little power of separating himself from any tie associated with the recollection of his departed wife, that it was thought of no longer. Witnessing all this in Katherine, witnessing it too daily, could any abatement be expected in my former attachment to her? No; that was impossible.—Indeed, but that I am afraid of being thought to speak profanely, I should be tempted to say that my sentiments towards her were not those of an ordinary passion; I regarded her with something not unlike a reverential homage, considering her almost in the light of a superior being, to whom a spiritual devotion only was to be paid. I could fancy it like that which is felt by a young novice whom enthusiasm has led to devote herself to a life of religious seclusion, when she looks up to those emblems of her faith to which alone the homage of her heart is addressed. Yes; I looked up to Katherine with a similar kind of enthusiasm, as one whom I might be permitted to love, provided I never suffered myself to pass the bounds of silent admiration.

Confined however as I now was by the attention which Mr. Carberry seemed so anxious

to receive from me, and which it was impossible for me to refuse, my time was so much occupied, that even though I gave but a very moderate share of attention to my business, I could with difficulty now and then find an hour to devote to exercise, or to the attentions due to my other connections. In particular, I will freely own that I think Walter was neglected by me at this moment in a manner which even the circumstances that occasioned it could not justify. He indeed often passed his evenings at Chatham Place, and from Mr. Shelburne, I heard that he had no reason to suppose he was going on otherwise than well; so that there really did not appear much ground for me to exert that Argus watchfulness over him inculcated upon me by his father; and with this idea I endeavoured to lull my conscience to sleep, though it was not always that it would be so put off, it would sometimes give me a sharp rebuke.

As the season advanced, and we were now got to the middle of March, I adopted the plan of going out to take a walk early in the morning, by which means exercise was obtained without its interfering with the general avocations of the day. I commonly bent my course over Blackfriars Bridge, where I could get into something approaching to country,

and a purer air than that of Thames-street, and yet be back to breakfast by eight: occasionally, however, I took a different direction, and rambled towards the New Road, trespassing so far as not to be home till half past eight or near nine.

In one of these rambles, it was on a Friday morning, I was passing St. Andrew's Church just as the clock struck eight, when I saw a clergyman turn in at the gates of the church-yard. The hour naturally suggested the idea of a wedding, and I as naturally turned my eyes towards the church; when I saw standing upon the steps, as if waiting the clergyman's arrival,—Oh! it is impossible by words to convey any idea of the sensation which the sight raised in my bosom,—I saw Walter standing there with a lady and an elderly-looking gentleman. The flash of the forked lightning, or the barbed arrow shot from the twanging bow, could hardly have shot forward with greater rapidity than I did, and I was by Walter's side as they all entered the church, exclaiming emphatically, "Good God, Walter!!!"—The sound was like an electric shock to his ear; it was a voice he knew but too well, and he turned round,—never never can I forget his countenance at that moment!

For a few seconds I had no power to say more;

but glancing my eyes round, whom should I discover in the elderly gentleman, but the very Mr. Bridport, in whose niece's service I had met with my accident at Brighton! "Good God, Walter!" at length I repeated again, "what can this mean?—Yet why do I ask? The thing speaks for itself. Walter, are you in your right senses?"—At this moment, to add to the consternation visible on the countenances of the whole party, a man came running in the utmost haste into the church, panting for breath, with just power sufficient left to exclaim, "Is the ceremony over?" Then supporting himself against a pillar, he seemed as if ready to fall down in a swoon. The lady at the same time, turning her eyes towards him, gave a violent shriek, and would have fallen senseless to the ground, had she not been caught by the clerk. Mr. Bridport almost at the same instant turned round, with a movement as if he was going; but by an involuntary impulse, for which I knew not how to account, I seized hold of him rather roughly, saying, "You do not stir hence, sir, till this matter is explained." The clergyman, who had preceded the party into the church, but had gone to the vestry to put on his surplice, was as yet ignorant of what had passed; but now joining us, added one more countenance of astonish-

ment to those previously assembled. It was indeed a groupe to excite the astonishment of any spectator. In one part was the lady, senseless, supported by the clerk; in another a man, pale, ghastly, and panting for breath, leaning against the pillar, with his eyes fixed upon the lady; in another myself holding Mr. Bridport, who was struggling to get away; and in another Walter, looking on with a countenance expressive of the most wild consternation, motionless, and as if scarcely knowing whether he were dead or alive.

The clergyman looked first at one, then at the other; and at length fixing upon me as the person who seemed most likely to be able to give some explanation of the matter, "May I ask," said he, "what I am to understand by a scene which I own appears very extraordinary?". I had by this time somewhat recovered the first emotions excited in me; and taking a survey of the parties, no doubt of the truth remained upon my mind. I had seen Mr. Bridport often enough to recognise him directly; his niece I never saw but when in the act of rescuing her, and I could not therefore by any means be sure of her person; but I thought that I recognised her in the senseless female before me, while the situation in which the party was found left no room to doubt that

the purpose of their being there was for her hand to be joined to Walter's. But in what character the man who had joined us was to be considered I was wholly at a loss to conjecture, unless he was one who had a prior claim upon the lady, which he was come to assert. I replied, therefore, to the clergyman's question: "It is by no means in my power, sir, fully to explain the matter. Accident alone led me hither at this moment, or perhaps I should call it a kind and merciful interposition of Providence; since, from what I see, I have no doubt that this young man, who is a friend dearer to me than myself, was about to take a step that might have proved his utter ruin. From such a step, my arrival I trust will save him. I conclude, sir, that you came hither for the purpose of joining him to this lady?"

"Certainly. Their banns have been regularly published for the last three Sundays; and no objection to their union having been urged, I conceive myself fully authorized in what I was about."

"Indeed, sir, it was not my intention to arraign your conduct; I wish I could believe all here as guiltless of wrong intentions as yourself. But appearances are so strange, that I must suspect deep and terrible guilt somewhere; nor can sufficiently rejoice at having saved so dear,

so cherished a friend from a measure which must have involved him in the most cruel embarrassments, if not led to his utter ruin."

"Ruin indeed!" said the man who had come among us in so hasty a manner, and who now seemed first to recover the power of speech, "ruin indeed!—she is my wife."

At this Mr. Bridport, whom I still held, making a grand effort, broke from me, and, springing forwards, attempted to flee in so much haste, that slipping he fell headlong down the steps of the church, and was so stunned with the fall that he lay there senseless, we thought at first lifeless.

Walter had hitherto stood like a statue; but now regaining in some degree the use of his faculties, the difficulty only seemed to be in what way they were to be employed. Two objects principally called for our attention; the lady, who still remained senseless in the arms of the clerk, and her uncle, as we supposed him, who lay equally senseless upon the pavement. But by this time a number of people had assembled round, attracted by the accident of our fugitive; for this happening without the church, was observed by several persons who were passing, so that we had soon plenty of assistance; and a chair being brought, the lady was placed in it. The proper means to restore her were

now resorted to, and were after a while in some degree successful; but from her no explanation was to be obtained, all she could say was, " Hide me from him! I cannot bear to see him!" The man, then, who had claimed her as his wife, coming up to her, and taking her by the hand, said in an accent of the most soothing kindness, " Mary, will you not speak to me?" but she only exclaimed in a tone of increased agony, " O hide me from him! hide me! hide me!"—and concealed her face in both her hands.

I went to her:—" Calm yourself, I entreat, madam," said I. " To you we must look for an explanation of these mysteries."

" Not now, not now!" she exclaimed, " another time!—O take me hence! I cannot bear to see him."

" Who is it you cannot bear to see?" I inquired; for indeed I thought from appearances that there was more than one person the sight of whom might reasonably fill her bosom with self-reproach.

" Who is it?" said she wildly. " My husband, that young man, that vile old wretch! —O hide me, hide me from them all!"

These exclamations were sufficient to convince me that I was not much mistaken in supposing there had been some terrible scene of

villany in which Mr. Bridport had been a principal actor. "Walter!" I said, "to you I must apply:—you surely can explain the matter."

"But partially," he replied, in a voice so tremulous as to be scarcely articulate. "I will tell you all faithfully, as far as I know; but not now. I have not at this moment the power of speech."

"At least tell us whither this unfortunate, and I fear guilty, man must be carried."

"His present residence is in Bedford Row.

"And the lady?"

"Oh never! never!" exclaimed the lady; "never will I enter those doors again!"

"Will you not go with me, Mary?" said her husband tenderly.

"No, no!" she exclaimed:—"to some corner where I may be concealed from all the world!"

The clergyman here interposed, and with a kindness worthy of his vocation said, there seemed to be something very extraordinary in the lady's history; but her mind was now too much overcome to admit of her immediate return to her home and her husband's protection, so kindly offered by him. If he approved it, they should both go to his house, which was only in Ely Place; and when somewhat composed, it would be easier to determine what

was to be done with regard to her. As to the gentleman, he must be carried home.

By this time among the people collected about us was a surgeon, who volunteered his assistance upon the occasion, and under his direction the patient was lodged in his own house; the rest thus disposed of, Walter alone remained upon my hands. At parting with the clergyman I expressed a wish to know more about the lady, and asked permission to call upon him in the course of the day and inquire after her. To this he obligingly consented; and giving me his address, he proceeded home. Walter then taking my arm, we walked away together.

CHAPTER VII.

A breakfast in the country, and a dish of conversation served up as a supplement to it.

"No, not that way!" said Walter, as I was turning to the left when we came out of the churchyard.—"O no, not that way, Sam, I conjure you."

"What do you mean, Walter?"

"I was afraid you were going to lead me home to uncle Shelburne's."

"Indeed I hardly know what my intentions were; I had none very decided, and rather turned that way instinctively than otherwise. "But why were you *afraid* I was going thither?"

"I cannot go immediately, I must have time to recover myself." He paused a moment, then continued,—"Sam, let me first have some private conversation with you; let us walk somewhere out of town, and breakfast together where we can talk freely, and without danger of interruption. I shall recover myself as we walk, and then will tell you all I know; but believe me there is a part of the late scene yet wholly inexplicable to me."

"Whither shall we go then?—to Hampstead?"

"With all my heart; we can breakfast at some house upon the heath."

Towards Hampstead, then, we bent our course. Walter at first walked with such a feeble, trembling step, evidently the effect of an agitated mind, that I more than once asked whether he had not engaged in an undertaking which would prove more than he could accomplish; but he assured me that he felt better every moment, and was confident that he was seeking the most likely means of composing his mind.

Arrived at the place of our destination, we called for breakfast; when Walter threw himself into a chair, exclaiming, "Yes, Heaven is kind!—a few minutes more, and it had been too late! Yet why do I say this?—If what I have heard be true, all would have been null in itself; my folly, great as it was, would have been wholly nugatory! But O in what a maze of perplexities might I have been entangled!—and what villany must have been practised somewhere!" He paused, and sat silent awhile; the breakfast was brought in, and we seated ourselves at the table. Presently he broke out again:

"But tell me, Sam, by what miracle, as I may almost call it, did the folly of which I was about to be guilty come to your knowledge?"

"The first intimation I had of it was seeing you at the church-door."

"What then had brought you thither?"

"Mere chance."

"I concluded that you had by some means been informed of what was going forward, and came on purpose to save me."

"Most assuredly, if my suspicions had been awakened, I should have come expressly for the purpose. But not the remotest idea of your having such a thing in prospect ever reached me."

"What then could have induced you to stroll that way at so early an hour?"

"Only a practice I have lately adopted of walking out early in the morning whenever the weather is tolerable."

"But that you should come that way?"

"It was for no other reason than that I sometimes go one way, sometimes another; and happened this morning to have gone nearly to Paddington. I was passing by the church on my way home."

"And just at the moment when I was going in?"

"Even so. The clock had scarcely done striking eight, when seeing the clergyman enter the iron gates, I turned my head that way without any particular design. You may judge of

my feelings when I saw in you the intended bridegroom."

"Merciful God!—If the clerk then had not by mistake at first brought the wrong key, we had been already in the church, and you had passed it in ignorance what a wretched dupe I had been made."

"Dupe, Walter?"

"Yes, I fear so. A thousand things now crowd on my remembrance which might have awakened my suspicions long ago; but I was fascinated, and could see nothing."

"And this has occasioned your late mysterious conduct?"

"Have I appeared mysterious?"

"Undoubtedly."

"Yet you never urged me upon the subject; —I hoped therefore that nothing had appeared in my conduct or manner to excite speculation."

"Speculation it certainly excited; and as far as I thought myself authorized to endeavour to explore your heart, I think I have at various times hinted as much."

"I have not then been so able a dissembler as I supposed.—Dissembler!—O Heavens!— that such a word should be applied to Walter Armstrong! Sam, I seem to myself as if

awakened from a dream, a lethargy,—I can scarcely persuade myself that all which I have to confess is really a fact. O he must be a deep, an artful villain! Villany there is somewhere, it is clear: she cannot be wholly blameless, yet surely the weight of guilt is his."

He paused; he walked backwards and forwards in the room for a few minutes, then sat down again. "O Samuel!" he said, "your accident at Brighton!—it was unfortunate to yourself, but it has proved much more unfortunate to me! Your life was placed in imminent danger by that affair; but it has been the shipwreck of my peace of mind, perhaps of my future fame and credit in the world. It will perhaps be the loss to me of the love—it must be of the esteem, of the respect, of those whose love and esteem, till that fatal moment, I was above all things anxious to deserve and obtain. Yet no: surely, Sam, you will still be my friend; I shall still be the cherished object of your regard; I shall still be that of my father's! You cannot respect me as you have done: the best construction you can put upon what has passed is to ascribe it to weakness of mind, and weakness of mind may be pardoned; the object may still be that of a compassionate love and re-

gard; but esteem and confidence are at an end. O Sam, this is the being who now stands before you."

"For the love of Heaven, Walter," I exclaimed, "talk not thus! you wring my soul: you can never be unworthy of esteem, I am sure. No, Walter—wrong me not by supposing!—O that you could read my heart!—Walter, Walter, 'tis unkind even to suspect." I could say no more: he, too, was entirely overcome, and a silence of several minutes ensued.

"Well," he said at length, "'tis vain thus by reflections and circumlocutions to delay the moment of confession; it must come at last; nay, perhaps, the story known, I may appear less censurable than while it is only guessed at. Listen, then, Samuel!

"Fresh as the whole of our transactions at Brighton are in your memory, you will well recollect, that when we found you were from your accident rendered incapable of moving, and that it was necessary to call assistance to get you conveyed home, the lady whom we had rescued and I determined upon walking to Brighton, to procure the assistance required. You will recollect, that in our way we met with a gentleman in a chariot, who stopped on seeing the lady. But why advert to these cir-

cumstances? As far as relates to yourself, the commencement of my acquaintance with these people is well known to you. Whether you saw enough of the lady to judge of her beauty, I know not; for I do not recollect that on any subsequent occasion she was made the theme of our conversations, or that I ever heard you express an opinion upon the subject."

"Indeed my view of her was transient, hurried:—her face was all the time much more turned towards you than me; and through her green veil her features were seen so imperfectly, that I could never have been sure of knowing her again. I only conclude from other circumstances, that she was the lady with you in the church this morning. I was never aware that you had any further acquaintance with her, or even that any had continued between you and Mr. Bridport after he ceased to concern himself about the progress of my recovery. I must own that I thought the discontinuance of his inquiries after me, all circumstances considered, was, contemplated under the most charitable point of view, a great breach of good manners;—perhaps it might not unjustly be called a want of gratitude and humanity. Yet as there was something in his appearance which I did not like, I was not very

solicitous for the continuance of his acquaintance. But I interrupt your story; proceed, I entreat."

"That silly propensity which I have to being easily caught by female attractions has been the source of this misfortune; Heaven grant that it may be the last into which it leads me! Indeed, Sam, she is handsome; and even you, I am sure, will allow it, if you ever have an opportunity of seeing her more accurately. But this was not all: there was a something interesting and romantic in the circumstances which brought me acquainted with her, that fed my romantic feelings; and even if she had not been handsome, I should probably have fancied her so. As she took hold of my arm to walk on with me, scarcely recovered from the terror she had been in, agitated too with the idea of what had befallen you, of which she was the innocent cause, her limbs trembled, her heart palpitated, and without support it had been impossible for her to move a step.— Was there nothing in all this to excite emotion in a heart of sensibility? O Sam, I own that at this moment mine was far from being unmoved;—I was rejoiced on many accounts when we met her uncle's carriage. Her uncle's!— Heavens! is he really her uncle!—must I doubt his being so!—Perhaps I ought to have doubted

it long ago!—At that moment, however, I had no reason to doubt it. I was rejoiced, then, when we met the carriage, as well on the account of my fair companion as on yours, since it furnished me with an opportunity of placing her in safety, relieved from the fatigue of walking in her still agitated state, at the same time that it afforded the means of procuring you assistance somewhat more speedily. Yet strange and unaccountable to myself were the emotions I experienced in handing her into it. I have a confused idea in my head now, though the impression it then made upon me was slight, that the manner in which this uncle questioned her, when he stopped the carriage and inquired how she came to be walking,—he thought she had been gone out on horseback,—was somewhat particular, and as if the inquiry had a movement of jealousy in it, from seeing her with a young man who was an entire stranger to him. But at the moment I scarcely regarded it, or, if I did think about it, attributed it to an uncle's anxiety for his niece; and before matters were explained, the seeing her with a young man in that way had certainly an odd appearance.

"Till you were properly attended to I could not think of any thing else; but that done, I found the lady often obtruding herself into my thoughts, with feelings which I had never

previously experienced. I had talked of my love for Margaret, I fancied it sincere; I had sometimes fancied myself in love with Katherine; but my present emotions were very different from any I had ever felt in the most ardent moments of my fancied love for either of these cousins; nor could I restrain myself from running to her lodgings in the evening, when you seemed quite composed, and I thought I might leave you with safety, for a few minutes, to inquire after her. I found her perfectly recovered from the alarms of the morning; the paleness of terror was exchanged for the most enchanting bloom, contrasted with soft blue eyes, and a complexion fair as alabaster itself. I thought I never saw any thing more lovely. She inquired after you with an air of tender solicitude, which seemed to evince a heart full of sensibility; and both she and Mr. Bridport were profuse in their expressions of gratitude for the courageous manner in which we had rescued her, and concern for the consequences with which it had been attended. I was really forced to break away from the torrent of their acknowledgements, for my heart almost reproached me with having quitted you for a single instant; but they would not let me leave them without a promise that I would see them again whenever I had any time

to spare. Shall I own it, Sam? my feelings on this occasion were so different from those I had experienced towards either Margaret or Katherine, that whereas I was always desirous of talking of them to you, and eager in pouring forth my raptures, I felt now a shyness of even mentioning the name of Miss Bridport, and was glad to take advantage of the surgeon's injunction, that you should be kept as quiet as possible, to avoid even mentioning that I had been to inquire after her. It was not that I felt thus early in the affair any thing wrong in what I had done, and was therefore reluctant to mention the subject. I had then no cause of self-reproach, for I cannot even now think that my first visit was more than good manners required of me. That I was wrong afterwards I freely acknowledge; nay, though I was willing to deceive, and even desirous of deceiving myself as to the motives of my reserve towards you, yet it was not maintained without frequent visitings of compunction and self-reproach.

"Till the arrival of your father I saw the lady no more. Mr. Bridport was, as you know, in the habit for a short time of calling two or three times in the day to inquire after you; but when your father was with you, I felt less necessity for the close attendance on my part which I had hitherto observed; nay, you

were yourself anxious that it should be somewhat relaxed, lest its continuance should prove injurious to my health. It was then that I took advantage of the pressing invitations of Mr. Bridport, and went frequently to visit him and his niece. At every visit I was more and more charmed with the latter. It was natural that I should be desirous of knowing something of their history; and that led me to make inquiries of the mistress of the house where we lodged, whether she knew any thing about them. From her I learned but few particulars, only such as were circulated in Brighton by the servants they had brought with them: but a neighbour of the hostess, who was present when she related them, on her saying that the lady was niece to the gentleman, said with a sneer, 'Niece indeed!' The hostess, however, took her up very short, with a remark, that it was hard indeed if a gentleman of his age could not be kind to a niece who had nothing to live upon but what she owed to his goodness, without ill-natured things being said of them. She did not know whose care a young lady, who had neither father nor mother, could be under so properly as her uncle's. And indeed, Sam, I must here declare, that I never saw any thing in the *behaviour* of either which could give me the least suspicion that they stood in any other relation

than that of uncle and niece. There were other circumstances which, perhaps, ought to have awakened suspicions in my mind that all was not right; that there was something which they were afraid should be discovered: but as to their behaviour personally towards each other, it was always marked with the strictest propriety. If now I am induced to fear that the expression of 'Niece indeed!' was not uttered without reasonable cause, it is more from what passed in the church this morning, from the claim made of her by that man as his wife, and from the very suspicious behaviour of Mr. Bridport throughout the whole scene, than from any thing I had ever before observed.

"It was about my third or fourth visit, I think, that Mr. Bridport said,—'Excuse me, Mr. Armstrong, but your name not being a very common one, I am led to ask whether you may not be of a family with one of whom I was formerly acquainted at college, the Armstrongs of Winstanton in the county of Durham?' I replied that I was indeed of that family, that the present owner of Winstanton was my uncle. 'It was to him,' he said, 'that I referred when I mentioned being acquainted with one of the name: he was my fellow collegiate, but since we left college we have never met. He married early in life, I think, and, I am told, has a very

large family.'—' He has'—' You are perhaps then, sir, son to the next brother, who, I think, went to India, and married there?'—' I beg your pardon, sir. I am not his son, he never had any family, and his wife has been dead some time. I am son to the youngest brother, a clergyman, who has the living of Langham, in Wiltshire.'—' Indeed! I know him by character extremely well, but never had the pleasure of being personally acquainted with him;—this is really an extraordinary rencontre. You come hither, I understand, in the intention of sailing with the next vessel for France?'—' Even so, sir'—' And the gentleman who has met with this unfortunate accident is perhaps your travelling tutor?'—' Only a friend and companion, nearly of my own age.'—' Well,' he said, he should now have an additional motive for wishing a continuance of the acquaintance, in finding how nearly I was connected with his old friend.

" All this, Sam, would probably have been communicated to you; but at my return to our lodgings I found you asleep, and having engaged to drink tea with the Bridports, no opportunity occurred that day for the communication. From this time the uncle's attention to me was greater than you can conceive; it seemed as if he never could have enough of my com-

pany; while I was not sorry to have such ready access to his captivating niece, whom I admired more and more every time I saw her.—Sam, I blush now at the recollection how much I must have appeared to neglect you, how much I did neglect you indeed. I can only say that I have been all along under an infatuation, to a sense of which I am but this moment awakened. The first thing which ought to have excited my alarms was, that the very next time I saw him after this recognition of me as the nephew of an old acquaintance, and that was the evening of the same day, he took an opportunity of saying to me, his niece not being then in the room, 'Mr. Armstrong, I said in the morning, and I repeat it now, that I hope both for your own sake and from your connection with an old friend, with whom I have spent many hours that I recall with the greatest pleasure,—from both these motives, I wish most earnestly that an acquaintance which chance has so oddly brought about may be improved by every possible opportunity afforded us; I should indeed be the most ungrateful of men if I did not wish it, considering the great obligation I owe you. But there is one thing I feel myself compelled to say,—you will, I trust, excuse the freedom with which I speak,—I am a little awkwardly cir-

cumstanced here; I am obliged, for particular reasons, to live in a very retired way, and have absolutely declined entering at all into the society of the place; I have even behaved almost with rudeness to some who sought my acquaintance. Towards one family, who know many of mine and my dear Maria's connections, and who were therefore very desirous of engaging us in their parties, this has been more particularly the case. I consider the acquaintance which I solicit with you, upon a very different footing. You probably have no intention, any more than myself, of mingling with general society; but you will see that my having rejected the advances of other persons in this decid d way, places me rather in a delicate situation as to the intimacy I wish to cultivate with you. May I then ask it as a favour, that it may rather remain a matter between ourselves, that it may not be talked of by you even with your friend? His father seems a very worthy man, but he is a talking one; and his garrulity may spread this intimacy in a way which would bring me into a very unpleasant situation.—You understand me, I dare say, Mr. Armstrong;—you know, among men there are nice points of honour, and one cannot tell what might be said or thought.'

"Indeed, Sam, I think now that I ought to

have been inspired only with the deepest indignation at so strange a request, convinced that it could not be made with any good intention, and have instantly broken off the acquaintance. But infatuated as I then was, it appeared to me in a very different point of view. I saw nothing objectionable in it, but replied without hesitation, that I was sorry he thought it necessary to make apologies upon the subject; I perfectly felt the force of what he said, and would certainly comply with his request. Indeed, the manner in which he expressed himself impressed me with the idea that he was apprehensive lest, if our intimacy were to become matter of notoriety, he might be called out to one at least, if not more meetings of a nature not very pleasant to people of my age, amid all the fire and ardour of youth, and still less so when the blood is cooled by the revolution of sixty or more revolving suns. To subject him to being placed in such a situation, certainly was not my wish.

"Such, Sam, believe me, is the true history of this intimacy being at first concealed from you. I then considered it as only a temporary thing, and thought that, as soon as we were able to proceed on our journey, there would be an end of the matter, and I might talk it freely over with you; or else that some

opportunity might be taken to make the communication when your father was not present. In short, I felt that I must see Maria, that this was become indispensable to my supporting life, and I was therefore little disposed to be nice about the terms on which such a privilege was to be obtained; and by degrees this concealment became such a fixed habit, that it would have cost me in the end a much greater struggle to prevail upon myself to be explicit with you, than it did at first to be otherwise.

"The next step in this mystery was, that I was not to come to Mr. Bridport's lodgings, but that we were to meet upon the beach about a mile west of the town, and thence make excursions together; we should thus be able to enjoy each other's company freely and unreservedly, without its becoming a subject of animadversion to others. This again I was weak enough to assent to, and in this way we met almost every day. I have no doubt that he was here actuated by fears, lest your father, to whom he was known, should ever see us together, and so it might come to your ears; since, from many circumstances which now throng to my recollection, I am clear that his great anxiety was to prevent your knowing any thing of the connection—You will now see clearly, Sam, what occasioned the change in

my sentiments with respect to going abroad, that by the time when we could have gone, it was become impossible for me to tear myself from Maria. My idea of abandoning painting arose in the first place from a general restless and unsettled feeling; and in the next place, that having it in my mind to make a formal offer of myself to Maria, I conceived that my being in such a profession might prove an obstacle to my success with her.

"Since her uncle was a man of good family and fortune, and, according to all appearance, intended to make her his heir; I thought it probable that he would not consent very readily to her marrying a man in a situation inferior to what she held as his adopted daughter; that he would expect her to marry according to his own rank in society. As yet, he had made no inquiries into the nature of my pursuits; it had appeared in conversation, that my great object in going abroad was to become acquainted with the noble collections in the Louvre at Paris; but this might be only as an amateur; it did not follow that I was going to study them professionally. The idea thus adopted of the possibility of my profession being an obstacle to my success with Maria, or at least with her uncle; the profession itself immediately became hateful to me,

and it was under this impulse that I laid open so much of my mind to you as related to the quitting that, and abandoning our French journey. I thought that if I were to go into one of the genteel professions, as they are called, there was less reason to apprehend objections, on the part of Mr. Bridport, to my union with his niece. Still I could not like the thoughts of the church, and I expressed my wish that you should suggest to my father the studying law, or physic.

"Mr. Bridport and his niece were to quit Brighton about the time that we did. Many circumstances which I now recollect, lead me to think that their departure was the consequence of ours: thus much I clearly recollect, that I never heard any time determined on for their departure, till I one day mentioned your being so well, that we now began to think of moving. Mr. Bridport said immediately, that the time was almost expired, which in his own mind, at the time of their coming down, he had allotted to staying there, and he thought that he should not prolong it. 'You, I suppose, Mr. Armstrong,' said he, 'and your friend will proceed on your continental scheme?'—I replied with some hesitation, almost ashamed to confess my fickleness, I believed not; this delay had thrown us so late in the summer, that it was

probable we might give it up, at least till another year. 'Indeed I think you will be right,' said Mr. Bridport; 'the season is too much advanced to set out on a scheme of the kind. And to tell you the truth, my young friend, I am not very fond of my countrymen thronging in such crowds to the French capital; they are not likely, in my opinion, to get much good there; I am not disposed to think well of the French.'—This was enough for me, even though I had been much less indisposed to going. The opinion of one whose favour I was above all things anxious to conciliate, thus decidedly given, left no room for hesitation; and the next day the subject being started by you, Sam, I failed not to make known my sentiments; though indeed I can scarcely describe the reproaches which my heart made me during the whole of our conversation. This done, I failed not to communicate the result to my Mentor.

"He congratulated me upon the scheme being given up, and said he thought I had determined very wisely, adding, that he should have been sorry indeed to see one for whom he had so great a regard thrown into such a scene of temptation. 'And what then shall you do with yourself, my young friend,' said he, 'in quitting Brighton?'—I answered, that this

was not positively determined, but that I probably should go to London. He replied, that he was rejoiced to hear it; for, since he and his niece were going thither, they should then not be deprived of my society. This confirmed my purpose very decidedly; and as you know, Sam, to London I went.

"As to the remainder of my story, it is this. The habit of keeping this whole matter a secret was now so fixed upon me, that I continued it instinctively, never concerning myself with analysing the propriety or impropriety of my conduct, but thinking only of the best expedients to keep you, my uncle, and above all my father, free from suspicion. To return to my profession, appeared the most effectual mode of obtaining my end; and on this I resolved, taking my chance of the effect it would have upon my views with Maria. I indeed satisfied myself with the reflection, that I could abandon it when matters were to be brought to a conclusion between us, if that should be required.

"My intimacy with Mr. Bridport and his niece has been constantly increasing ever since; and when I thought matters ripe for a declaration of my sentiments, I opened my suit in due form. It was received with every possible appearance of delight, as indeed I had reason

to expect it would be, on the lady's part, but with some hesitation on that of the uncle. He urged my extreme youth, and the disproportion of our ages, his niece being so much older than me: if our ages had been reversed, he said he should have seen less objection to the match. However, if, upon talking with Maria, her affections should appear strongly engaged to me, he was not of a disposition warmly to oppose his own ideas to the happiness of those with whom he was connected. It was then that I first adverted to the profession I was following, saying, that if it was a situation in which he should not like his niece to be placed, I was ready to change it for any one more conformable to his and her wishes. As to that, he said, there was no occasion to be in haste about it; his fortune was ample; and if I proved a good husband, it was in his power to make us both happy.

"He kept me in this doubtful state for a short time, till, urged by importunities, for I was often repeating to him how much my heart was devoted to Maria, and how cruel it was to keep me so long in suspense; he at length yielded, and consented to our being united. Rejoiced at obtaining this consent, I thought of nothing but availing myself of it; I never thought of making any terms; I talked only

of my happiness; and Mr. Bridport was only lavish in his wishes that my affection for his niece might never experience any abatement. No plan was ever settled for us, no arrangement made, how or where we were to live; whether we were to remain under his roof, or to have an establishment of our own; and if the latter, how it was to be supported. I thought that I should be the husband of Maria, and I thought of nothing more.—O Sam! I look back now with horror at the gulf from which I have been snatched!—Memory awakened, I shudder when I reflect what the designs of these people must have been. Think, Sam, think of an uncle, if such he really can be, suffering an affair of this kind to be carried to such lengths, without inquiring into the circumstances of his niece's destined husband—without even asking whether my father had been made acquainted with what was going forward!—Sam! Sam! shield me from reflection! I cannot bear to think of the affair any more! shield me from my own thoughts, or I must go distracted;—perhaps in distraction lies my only hope of repose!"

CHAPTER VIII.

Return from the country breakfast.—A hue and cry at the wharf.—Maternal solicitude.—The bridegroom à son insçu.*—A new-fashioned elopement to Gretna-green. Sagacious mode of search instituted for the fugitives.—The mate mated.*

In analysing in my own mind the story to which I had been listening, I was every moment more and more impressed with the idea, that this niece of Mr. Bridport's, as by courtesy she was called, was some unfortunate creature whom this wretched man had seduced. Indeed, from what appeared in the church, it was to be inferred that she was some wife whom he had inveigled away from her husband; and it seemed probable, that, growing tired of her, his project was to relieve himself from the burden at poor Walter's expense. Artful and hackneyed in the world, he would easily see that the person he had to deal with was young and inexperienced, that he was deeply smitten with the woman, and that it would not be difficult to make a dupe of him. He accordingly practised upon him in a very artful way, till his purpose was on the point of being accomplished; and the manner in which the last finishing stroke to it was prevented, was by a

combination of circumstances so extraordinary, that it seemed as if they ought not to be referred to chance alone, but to be considered as the effect of a more than mortal interposition.

"Walter," I said, as he ceased speaking, "indeed one knows not whether most to admire the deep villany with which this scheme has been carried on, or the almost miraculous manner in which its completion has been frustrated. O heavens! what tenfold depravity must that heart possess, who could take advantage of a benefit conferred, to bring ruin and disgrace upon the man from whom it had been received!"—I paused, a silence of a few moments ensued,—"And yet, Walter," I continued, "though much the larger portion of guilt may be the mock uncle's, the niece cannot be guiltless; she must have known her situation—have known too well that she was the wife of another, and that she was acting, even if in charity we suppose it only a secondary part, yet that she was lending her assistance to the carrying on a most infamous and detestable plot. The best motive that can be ascribed to her is, that she yielded to the plot, in hopes of getting a sum of money from the instigator, and would then have abandoned you, knowing that she never could be legally your wife.—That scream, those wild expres-

sions on recovering from her swoon, proclaimed conscious guilt in terms not to be mistaken."

"I think so; and yet, Samuel, it is hard, very hard, to me to impute guilt in any degree to her, much more so heinous a degree of it. Oh, if you had seen and known her, as I have done, I think even you would have been deceived."

"It is impossible to say. Guilt has so many ways of masking its designs!—But waving this matter till we have more grounds on which to judge either party, a more important matter is to decide what we are now to do."

"Do!" exclaimed Walter! "what are we to do!—Any thing but let me see at this moment the faces of those with whom I am most nearly and dearly connected!—Sam, the knowledge of this unfortunate affair has been thrust upon you; I have been in a manner compelled to make you the confident of it; if my whole guilt and folly had not been in this extraordinary manner exposed, I know not that I should have had strength of mind otherwise to bear the sight even of you. But this being the case, it is to you I must look as my only refuge under heaven, till I am so far reconciled to myself, as to bear the thoughts of seeing others. Tell me then, Sam, where can I go, what can I do?—Where can I hide myself and

all the train of wretched reflections that crowd upon me?"

"Walter, my dear Walter, if you ask my advice, I would say, Return to your uncle's house—"

"Never!—impossible!"

"And why impossible?"

"Spare me, Sam! spare me!—What! go where I am known? where I shall become a sight as a fool, a dupe, as I scarcely know what?—I know not what epithets to apply to this transaction from beginning to end; but this I know, that I cannot at present see any one but yourself."

"Think, Walter, think, what a resolution this is to form."

"It is not a resolution; 'tis feeling, powerful feeling, which cannot be controlled."

"Go down then to your father—"

"Oh! hold! hold!"

"Can you doubt that you would be received there with open arms?"

"Would that I were sure of being received with bitter reproaches! that were easier to be endured."

"From him, 'tis true, this unhappy affair cannot be concealed; but it may be locked up within his own breast, no other person need know it."

"And what will be the effect on him when

he knows it?—Sam, I thought I had murdered him once before, but now!—I cannot bear to think!"

"Calm these agitations, for Heaven's sake! Indeed, Walter, you consider yourself as more guilty than you really are. Your frank and open heart has been practised upon most cruelly, your generous nature has been employed as a weapon against yourself."

"Say, rather, that my fault admits of no excuse, nor seek to palliate what never can be palliated. I have sinned against friendship, that is vile; but how much more deeply have I sinned against filial duty! There are no words which can describe the deep guilt of having acted thus towards such a father, Samuel: I cannot, indeed I cannot, see him at present; I must have some time first to arm myself with fortitude for the meeting."

I found that it was useless at that moment to urge the matter further; that perhaps the sight of any one while he was in such a state of mind would entirely overturn his already half-deranged senses. The only expedient I could think of was to propose our going together to my apartments at the wharf, where he could remain for a few days till his mind should be more settled, and he could come to some determination as to his permanent views. At this proposal he started,

as if relieved from a dreadful burden; and saying that I had mentioned the only thing which could make him tolerably easy, we agreed to lose no time in putting the plan into execution. We accordingly set forwards for London; but such a length of time had elapsed, that it was two o'clock before we arrived in Thames Street.

Here a new and very unexpected scene awaited me. I had been assisting at the prevention of one wedding: I had no idea that I was suspected of having attended the celebration of another; nay, of having acted a very principal character in it. I accompanied Walter to my room, and was going out again with the intention of speaking to Mr. Fenton, when at the bottom of the stairs I met his better half, who indeed looked big with some very important matter. On seeing me, she exclaimed with an eloquence only to be inspired by the warm maternal feelings of ladies in her line of life, "Where are my daughters?—what have you done with my poor children?—where have you left them? Oh, who could ever have thought of this!"

I was so exceedingly astonished that at first I scarcely knew how to answer; but recovering myself, I said, "Your daughters, madam! I really do not know any thing about them."

"Oh, don't say so!—don't think to deceive me: it is not for nothing that you and they have been absent all the morning, and nobody could find out where you were gone! Tell me where you have left them!—only bring 'em back to me! Let me know the worst!—and their dear father and I won't be harsh with 'em."

"Indeed I should be happy, madam, if it were in my power to give you any satisfaction; but upon my honour I know nothing of the young ladies."

"Oh, but you must know, when you went out with them early this morning."

"I went out with them, Madam?—This is some very unaccountable mistake. I repeat it, upon my honour, I have not seen either of the young ladies since yesterday at dinner. I went out by myself early to take a walk; and should have returned by myself, but that I met with my friend Mr. Armstrong by the way, and he has walked home with me."

"Yes, but you shall never make me believe that you stayed out all this time, when nobody could tell what was become of you, to take a walk only!—So, if you are married, you had better own it at once."

"I married, madam? Heaven forbid!"

"Nay, for that matter, I don't see why you should say Heaven forbid!—A man may be

much worse off with a wife than with one of my daughters; and I can't see any reason to say Heaven forbid! I'd have you to know, young gentleman, that I consider them quite as good as yourself, though you are so much taken notice of by your betters. I think it is Mr. Fenton and I that have more reason to say Heaven forbid! when we can give our daughters handsome fortunes, and that's more than some people's father can do for his son."

"I beg pardon, Madam, I own I spoke hastily: I should rather have said, Indeed I am not so happy. But the expression escaped me involuntarily, without due reflection upon my own situation and the merits of the young ladies. I can assure you, however, that I did not mean any reflection upon them; the exclamation rather arose from thinking, that if I had been in the predicament you suppose, it would not have been a very prudent measure on my part. I must, however, once more disclaim all knowledge of the affair, and assure you that I have not seen your daughters this morning. If I am married, as you seem determined shall be the case, I can truly say it is without my own knowledge. So with your permission, Madam, I will proceed whither I was going"—I own I was a little vexed at hearing the suspicion which had fallen upon me; and

perhaps in the irritation excited by it did not answer the unfortunate mother with all the civility I ought to have done; at least my conscience reproached me with this being the case, as I observed at parting with her a certain swelling in her bosom which I thought was not wholly ascribable to anxiety for the fate of her daughters.

Crossing the yard towards the compting-house, I met with one of my fellow clerks; who tendering his hand in the attitude of one disposed to give me a friendly shake, and with a very broad grin upon his countenance, "Well, Danville," said he, "am I to wish you joy?— The grand news of the wharf is, that you and one of the Miss Fentons have stolen a match upon the old folks this morning; though which is the happy lady nobody seems able to determine, both being absent. Whichever it is, I wish you all imaginable happiness."

"For your good wishes, Parker, I am much your debtor; but as far as the happiness you wish is to arise from my being at this moment the bridegroom of either of the Miss Fentons, they are, believe me, wholly nugatory; yet it has been so strenuously asserted by the good mother, that I really began to think there must be some truth in it, though I knew nothing of it myself. But tell me, what is all this about? I have

been out ever since a very early hour this morning, and was much surprised at my return to have both the young ladies required by the mother at my hands."

"Why, the matter is, that they are missing; and since you were missing also, you were immediately concluded to be gone together upon a matrimonial errand. A hue and cry has been raised, and messengers have been sent all over the town in every possible direction, but no tidings of them can be obtained. To say the truth, I was rather surprised at the thing, as none of us ever suspected you of having cast a tender eye on either of these lasses; and if you had, there would, I believe, have been no occasion to run away, as the father and mother seemed more disposed to court a match with you than to prohibit it. If another person had been missing on the same morning as yourself, there might have appeared more solid ground of suspicion."

I had no doubt of what he meant; but not wishing to have the name he alluded to brought upon the tapis, I affected to pay no attention to him; and after a few moments' desultory conversation we parted. I proceeded in search of Mr. Fenton, but did not find him; and learning that Mr. Carberry had sent two or three times

to say that he wanted me, I hastened to Chatham Place. I found the good merchant looking a little grave: "Samuel," said he, "I am sorry for what I hear; not that I think the thing itself objectionable, but the manner of conducting it I cannot approve. Nor can I see a motive for choosing to do clandestinely what would probably have been joyfully acceded to, if proposed fairly and openly."

"I beg your pardon, sir; but I conclude you mean to allude to the strange idea which I find in circulation this morning, of my being privately married to one of the Miss Fentons?"

"Even so."

"Then I can assure you the idea is founded entirely on error. It is very true that I went out early this morning, and am but just returned; but it is equally true that I went out entirely by myself, for the sole purpose of taking a walk, and that I have never seen either of the Miss Fentons since yesterday at dinner."

"What then detained you so long?—you cannot have been walking all this time?"

"Indeed, sir, I have not; a most unfortunate and unpleasant circumstance, of which I had not the remotest idea when I went out, and which came to my knowledge *accidentally*, or perhaps I ought to say *providentially*, de-

tained me, and prevented my returning till about half an hour ago, when I found that you had sent several times, wishing to speak with me."

"And you really know nothing of the Miss Fentons?"

"Indeed I do not."

"I am sorry to hear it, for their poor father's sake. He came to me this morning in great trouble, to tell me that neither his daughters nor you were any where to be found, and he must conclude that you were gone to be privately married to one of them. 'It is not, sir,' said he, 'that I should have made any objection to either of my daughters marrying Mr. Danville, (he is a very good young man, and I dare say will be always careful and attentive to business;) but one doesn't like things done underhand and without one's knowledge. Perhaps I might have wished them to wait awhile, as they are both young: but I don't know that I should even have required that, if I had found them very much set upon being married directly. I was only afraid that Mr. Danville didn't like my Emma, for I suppose 'tis she, so well as she liked him.' Indeed," Mr. Carberry added, "I wish the matter had been no worse than her being united to you, though not quite in a proper way; for that it is a matrimonial trip the girls are gone upon can scarcely be doubted,

and probably one much more liable to objection."

"I acknowledge myself much flattered, sir," I replied, "by Mr. Fenton's good opinion, and readiness to have given me one of his daughters; but I should be sorry indeed that either of them had really placed her affections upon me. All I can say is, that I have studiously avoided every thing which might give any of the family reason to suppose that I had the least inclination to either. They are, I believe, very good kind of girls; but one's inclinations, you know, sir, are not wholly in one's power, and I am too young to have entertained, as yet, any thoughts of matrimony."

"Well, Samuel, I am glad there has been nothing unhandsome on your part. As to the rest, though I think it would be by no means an undesirable connection for you, yet, if your inclinations do not lead that way, I would be far from recommending to you to act otherwise than in conformity with them." Ah, Mr. Carberry little suspected that I had inclinations; but that, so far from being able to act in conformity with them, it was one of the leading and most important objects of my life to control and combat them.

I must confess that I was a little vexed and tormented with this occurrence. It was plain

that all people were upon the gape with regard to me and one of these young damsels; nay, that it was even a thing by no means foreign to the ideas of the parents. The father had owned as much; and I thought the good mother's manner indicated more of disappointment than satisfaction when she found that she was really not addressing a son-in-law. Was this vanity? —I hope not,—I think not;—I think it was only seeing things as they really were. But what disturbed me most of all was, the sort of oblique hint thrown out by Mr. Fenton, that he suspected me really not to be an object of indifference to his daughter Emma. I thought it, too, somewhat unfortunate, that, determined as I was myself never to marry, other people should be so exceedingly forward in providing me with a wife.

But I was still once more on this memorable morning to be challenged as a bridegroom. Before I quitted Chatham Place I went up to the drawing-room to carry Katherine a book which the evening before she had requested to borrow of me. She coloured as I came into the room; and holding out her hand, a thing she had never in her life done before, "Mr. Danville," she said, "am I to congratulate you?—the report is, that you are married this morning. If so, believe me, I—I most sincerely

wish you all imaginable happiness." I took her extended hand, (Heaven knows it was an involuntary impulse, and I afterwards most severely reproached myself for it; here was a sort of tremulous movement in it,—I am sure there was at that moment a very tremulous one in my heart,) and, making my most grateful acknowledgements for her kind wishes, assured her that the rumour which had gone abroad was wholly unfounded. "There never," I added emphatically, "was any thing further from my ideas than to think of either of the Miss Fentons as a wife; and if I had done so, I should certainly not have made my advances, much less have brought the matter to a conclusion, in a clandestine way." All this time her hand remained in mine. I was surprised and shocked to the last degree at myself when I reflected on what I had done. "Indeed," she said, "Mr. Danville," —and methought her eyes glistened, and assumed a more than usually angelic expression as she spcke,—"indeed, Mr. Danville," she said, "I was rather surprised at the manner in which you had conducted this affair: I thought it a deviation from the usual frankness and openness of your character." I was half tempted, now that I had this private opportunity of speaking to her, to have made her at once the confident of Walter's situation; but I was

not sure that it was right to impart it even to her, till I had had some further conversation with Walter himself.

If I had before, however, been out of humour at the rumour of the morning, I was now rather disposed to bless it, since it convinced me that Katherine took an interest in whatever concerned my happiness. The manner in which she gave me her hand evidently showed that an event so important to me, as this certainly would have been, supposing it true, was not considered with perfect indifference by her; and this reflection was soothing to me, though Heaven knows the idea of building aspiring hopes upon it never was more remote from my bosom. At my return to the wharf, I found that some items had been obtained which led to the supposition that the fair fugitives were at that moment roving the high seas. There seemed strong reason to suspect that a coal vessel of Mr. Carberry's, which had sailed from the river that morning for the north to fetch coals, had not gone entirely in ballast, but had carried out a species of merchandize of which the superintendant of the wharf did not entertain any idea when the vessel got under weigh. To add to the distress, the wind had been so favourable, that the vessel must be by that time at a considerable distance, so that there

was no chance of its being overtaken if another should be sent in pursuit of it.

Indeed it now appeared, that the good father and mother might, from certain hints given by some of the persons about the wharf, very reasonably have suspected some hours sooner which way the fugitives were gone; but prepossessed with the idea that I was the Jason who had carried off the golden fleece, they were wholly insensible to any hints which tended towards giving their suspicions a contrary direction. Their researches had consequently been confined entirely to finding out if possible whither I was gone, well assured that wherever I was found their daughters would be found also. It must be confessed, however, that the sinking the names of the young ladies in the inquiry was rather the good mother's idea than her husband's. In her profound wisdom, she determined that it would be hazarding the reputation of her daughters if people were sent about the town inquiring for them; but if my name only was mentioned, their credit would be saved at my expense; the emissaries were therefore directed to seek for me, not for them. Thus it was very fortunate that no clue had been obtained to tracing my steps, or, instead of the privacy that Walter sought in our breakfast at Hampstead, we might have had half

a dozen constables intruding themselves into our party.

However, since from the intelligence obtained, and to which the good father and mother, disappointed at finding me return without the young ladies, could now pay attention, it seemed very clear in what sort of vehicle they had eloped, another suspicion was awakened as to the happy man under whose protection they were literally taking *a voyage to the land of matrimony.* A smart young mate, who had lately been received into our good merchant's service, had certainly gone off in the vessel which had sailed that morning; and it seemed a well-established fact on the wharf, that he had once or twice of late been seen in earnest flirtation with the young ladies: it was to *mademoiselle Clarisse* that he seemed, however, more particularly making *les doux yeux.* Miss Emma's errand, as there was no reason to suspect her of having a lover with her, seemed merely to attend upon her sister as bride's maid; or perhaps there was mingled with the affectionate purpose of attending her sister on so arduous an occasion, a little of that desire to see the world which is not uncommon in the minds of young ladies. Arrived at Newcastle, the route would not be long to Gretna Green, where the happiness of the young couple

might be completed. This, it is true, was not the usual way of travelling to that happy spot; but the hint may be useful to future adventurers, especially at the present very high price of posting.

I now remounted the staircase to my poor stray sheep, who, notwithstanding the painful predicament in which he felt himself, could not resist a laugh at the recital of my adventures, and the humorous elopement which had taken place. Yet this momentary gleam of sunshine soon passed away; not without a word of reproach to himself that he could laugh at such a moment, and particularly at the distress of parents occasioned by the folly of their children, when he considered that he must, by the confession of conduct somewhat similar, himself inflict such dreadful agony upon a father.

And now the question was, how we were to proceed. If Walter persisted in not going back to his uncle's, it was necessary that the latter should be made acquainted with the cause of his absence. This I hinted to him:—"O yes," he said, "I am well aware of that,—I never thought of any thing else. As to seeing him myself, that is impossible; if I were to go there under the idea of keeping the matter concealed by showing myself, I feel that my behaviour would betray me." It was then agreed that

I should make the communication to Mr. Shelburne; and I suggested at the same time calling in Ely Place, at Mr. Marsham's, the clergyman who had kindly permitted poor Walter's intended bride to be carried to his house, to know whether any further tidings were to be obtained of her.

"Indeed, Sam," he said, that will be doing me a great kindness. I know 'tis wrong, yet I cannot help still feeling some anxiety about her."

CHAPTER IX.

A great deal of business done in a very short time. —Interviews of various kinds ;—one very extraordinary and unexpected.—A bad husband and a good wife.—A sudden departure from London.

Behold me then sallying forth, not like the Knight of La Mancha armed cap-à-pee, in burnished steel, in quest of adventures; but as the faithful historian of the adventures of others, armed only with all the eloquence which it was possible to call to my assistance, in order to put the fairest colouring which truth would permit, upon the story it was my fortune to relate.

"Poor Mr. Armstrong!" exclaimed Mr. Shelburne, when he heard it.—"Poor Mr. Armstrong, what a heavy stroke this will be upon him!—Thankful as he must ever be that the affair had not gone one step further, yet, what a sad prospect does it present with regard to the future! Samuel, I have watched this young man ever since he has been under my care, with an assiduity which could not have been exceeded had he been my own son. I never saw a better heart, or a head less capable, or with less promise of ever being ca-

pable, of guiding itself; he must be in leading-strings all his life. Would to heaven that his father had the means of establishing him without any efforts of his own industry!—He has genius and capacity for many things, but never will apply steadily to any thing, and he ought to be always under his father's eye; whereas, in any pursuit he is to follow, he must be left, partially at least, to his own guidance. As to the present affair, it seems that he has fallen into the hands of artful worthless people, who have made him their dupe. But endeavour, Samuel, to impress him with the idea, that though I do not think him wholly blameless, I am not disposed to be severe to his errors. Assure him, that whenever he can bring his mind to return, he shall be received here on the same terms as before, and shall never hear a word from me or any of my family upon the subject, unless he chooses to begin it; nor shall he in any respect see the least alteration in our behaviour."

Making many acknowledgements on the part of my friend for this kindness, and paying on my own part the tribute I thought due to conduct which showed at once the man of sense and judgement, and the affectionate and feeling relation; I added that I would not fail to report his kindness faithfully to Walter, and

recommend to him not to hesitate a moment in accepting it. Mr. Shelburne then requested that he might be favoured with any further particulars which I could learn relating to the affair, of which he observed that we seemed as yet to have but a very superficial knowledge, and in which he could not but feel deeply interested.

I next proceeded to Ely Place, where I learned from Mr. Marsham, that the lady, who henceforth losing the name of Miss Bridport, to which she had no right, will be chronicled in these memoirs by that of Mrs. Corbett, to which she had an undisputed right;—I learned then from Mr. Marsham, "that Mrs. Corbett was accompanied to his house by her husband, who again proposed her going home with him; but she was too much agitated to bear such a measure at that moment, and a temporary lodging had been taken for her in Hatton Garden, whither she was removed: a sister, who had been living with Mr. Corbett for some time, had been sent for by him from his house at Hoxton, to take care of her. She continued however, as he understood, in a state of so much agitation, that no particulars could be obtained from her as to the origin of the strange scene in the morning: sometimes she broke out into a momentary wildness, but was

in general more disposed to lethargy and stupor. Mr. Marsham added, that Mr. Corbett, after his wife was disposed of, and left in the hands of her sister, had gone to speak to a lady, who he said would be deeply interested in all that had passed, particularly with regard to the accident which had befallen Mr. Bridport. Of the latter, Mr. Marsham said he only knew that his senses were not returned two hours before, and that the surgeon could perceive so little outward injury, that he apprehended the long insensibility must be occasioned by some material injury within."

Our interview was concluded by Mr. Marsham's saying, "You seem, sir, to be the friend of the deluded young man whom I was about inadvertently to have joined to this unhappy woman, and to be much interested in the affair?"

"I am indeed, sir."

"And probably your intention is to seek some elucidation of it? At present, it seems enveloped in a cloud of mystery."

"Most assuredly, sir.—According to the story I have been hearing from my friend, a terrible scene of villany has been acted, which I am determined shall be fully exposed."

"Will it be intruding too far, to request that I may be indulged with a communication of the particulars, when known?—I will own that

my curiosity, I will say my interest too, has been considerably excited by what I witnessed."

"Undoubtedly, sir;—I shall with pleasure gratify you as far as I am able." He expressed himself as exceedingly obliged by my ready compliance with his wishes, and I took my leave, having first received from him the proper direction to Mrs. Corbett's lodgings.

But before I went thither I determined to call in Bedford Row, at the house whither I knew Mr. Bridport had been carried. Assured that the return of his senses must lead to important discoveries, I was anxious beyond measure to hear whether any symptoms of their return yet appeared. I accordingly knocked at the door, which was opened by a servant, of whom I began to make inquiries concerning his master's state, when I saw coming out of the parlour Mr. Corbett himself: his features had made too strong an impression upon me in the morning not to be immediately recognised. I was equally recognised by him, and coming up to me he said: "If I am not much mistaken, sir, you are one of the gentlemen who were assembled in St. Andrew's church this morning? the friend, as I presume, of the Mr. Armstrong, who came thither in the intention of being united to the unhappy woman I claimed as my wife?"

" I am indeed that person, sir."

" May I then request the favour of you to walk into this parlour? We were extremely anxious to learn your name and address, as well as the address of Mr. Armstrong, and hitherto it has been impossible to obtain an answer to any question put to my unhappy wife."

I followed him into the parlour;—he had made use of the plural *we*, in the anxiety expressed to know my address, by which it appeared that there was a sharer in that anxiety; but little did I suspect who that sharer was to prove. On entering the room, I saw a lady sitting there in a pensive attitude, her elbow rested on the table and her head reclined upon her hand, whom I immediately recognised—oh, astonishment greater than I can express!—to be Mrs. Northington.

I started involuntarily, and with difficulty suppressed an exclamation of O heavens!—All the circumstances attending the little knowledge I had already obtained of this lady, had in no small degree excited my curiosity to know her history, and the situation in which I now found her was not calculated to diminish it. What surprised me still more was, that she too gave a start at seeing me, as if from some strong and impressive image then presented to

her mind. "Madam," said Mr. Corbett, "this is the gentleman who accompanied Mr. Armstrong to the church this morning."

"Excuse me, sir," said I: "you mistake in supposing that I had *accompanied* my friend thither. His intended marriage was unknown to me, till chance, or rather providence, led me that way at the moment my friend entered the church; I followed him in, not to assist at the ceremony, but to prevent its being performed."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Mrs. Northington emphatically. She again looked steadfastly at me. "I think, sir," she said, "your face is not wholly unknown to me. If I am not mistaken, you once called at my house in Grosvenor-street, on the part of Mr. Carberry the coal-merchant, to settle a mistake in an account between him and me?"

"Most true, madam."

"Mr. Corbett," then she said, "will you have the goodness to leave us for a few minutes? I wish to ask this young man some questions in private. "Sir," said she, then addressing herself to me, "you will not, I hope, object to what I ask. I have particular reasons for desiring our conversation to be without witnesses; but little as you know of me, it may possibly appear as if there were in this desire some in-

sidious purpose to be answered. I can most solemnly assure you that this is not the case. Nevertheless, if you feel any hesitation at complying with my wishes, I will say no more. Longer acquaintance may increase confidence, and you may then not feel the same objections."

I replied that Mrs. Northington's character was too well known in the world, to admit a suspicion that any request of hers could be dictated by insidious designs;—I was therefore perfectly ready to answer her questions as she desired.

She thanked me for these obliging sentiments, as she was pleased to term them, and Mr. Corbett retiring, she began:

"Mr. Danville, for I think, sir, that is the name by which I am to address you,"—

I bowed assent.

"Mr. Danville," she said, "is it impertinent to ask whether the Mr. Armstrong who has been engaged in this very unfortunate affair, is of the family of the Armstrongs of Winstanton in the county of Durham?"

"He is, madam."

"Possibly a son of the eldest brother, the now owner of Winstanton?"

"I beg your pardon, madam, he is son to the youngest brother, the clergyman."

"Indeed!"—She paused a few minutes; I

thought I saw something like a tear start into her eye; but recovering herself, she said, "Of Mr. Bernard Armstrong, I presume, who has a living somewhere in Hampshire or Wiltshire?"

"The same, madam: he has the living of Langham in Wiltshire."

"And he has a large family?"

"Pardon me, madam; my friend is his only child."

"He never had any other?"

"Never;—he was so unfortunate as to lose his wife in less than two years after they were married."

"He has then been a widower many years?"

"Full nineteen."

"And never married again?"

"Never, madam."

A pause of some minutes ensued, in which my fair examinatrix seemed exceedingly lost in thought. I must own that the questions hitherto put to me were not altogether what I expected;—I had presumed that they would have had some reference to the affair of the morning, in which, seeing her there, I naturally concluded her to be interested. But it did not appear very obvious how it could be elucidated by the knowledge, whether Mr. Armstrong had a large or a small family, whether he had been a long or a short time a wi-

dower, and other matters of a similar kind. I remembered, too, her emotions at the sight of Walter, when she saw him at the Shakespeare Gallery;—I remembered the picture of Mr. Armstrong hanging up in her room. All this told me plainly that there was a something with regard to this lady and Mr. Armstrong, to me wholly incomprehensible.—Thus we sat both thinking very deeply, during a short interval; not thinking aloud, as in the case of soliloquists in a drama, who choose to clothe their thoughts in audible sounds, though there is no one present, save and except the multitude that throng the *salle* to listen to them. Our case was different. Though we had each an auditor to whom our thoughts might have been communicated, we rather chose to think entirely to ourselves. Reader, the silence continued for about as long a period of time as it will take thee to read from my last reply to the first break in the next page; and I have therefore made this little digression, that thou mayest have a correct idea of the length that the silence really endured; nor suppose it longer or shorter than it really was.

I consider it as a great defect in some historians, that they do not ascertain matters of this kind with sufficient accuracy, but leave them too much to the imagination of the

reader; for, since it is certain that some readers will have more, some less, lively imaginations; one class may be for lengthening, another for curtailing the duration of the silence, till disputes may arise upon the subject of such a magnitude, as to terminate at last on the side of my male readers, (for male readers I expect to have, since my book is written by a *man*, not by a *woman*,) in a meeting with swords or pistols,—and on the side of my female ones,—how shall I say?—not in pulling caps, the mode of settling feminine differences in ancient days, but now exploded since there are no caps to pull;—nor yet could it be in tearing each other's clothes, for there is not fullness enough in the gown to permit of another taking up a handful so as to tear with any emphasis, although a lady acting with emphasis herself might be in great danger of tearing it;—in what way then?—But hold! the silence has now lasted long enough, it is time to renew the conversation.

"Mr. Danville," said Mrs. Northington, "this is a most unfortunate affair in which your friend has been engaged."

"Most unfortunate indeed, madam."

"Will it be presuming too far, if I ask how the acquaintance originated between him and the lady to whom he thought of being united?"

"By no means, madam;—I shall not hesitate to relate it to you, satisfied that Mrs. Northington would not make such a request without sufficient reason; that it would never be made merely to gratify an idle curiosity. I cannot therefore apprehend that it would be betraying friendship to make the communication you desire. On the contrary, it appears rather an act demanded by friendship, that the story may be known in its true colours, and that my friend may appear, if erring in judgement, yet free from any motive which an upright conscience may not avow. But the story is long, madam,—your patience, perhaps,—yet you seem so much interested—"

"Too deeply interested, indeed!—You little suppose, at present, sir, how deeply,—but that, too, must be known. If not trespassing then too long upon your time,—"

"My time, madam, can never be so satisfactorily employed as in the service of my friend."—So saying, I proceeded to relate all the circumstances attending Walter's connection with the Bridports, accompanied by as much of his history and my own, not directly connected with it, as was necessary to make the whole matter clear and comprehensible. In doing this, I had occasion more than once to introduce warm eulogiums upon Mr. Armstrong's general ex-

cellence of character, and particular kindness to me, by which I thought my fair auditress seemed particularly affected. The narrative was concluded with some severe reflections upon the part which Mr. Bridport appeared to have acted in the affair.

She heard me with a variety of emotion, which rendered her before fine countenance incomparably more interesting; and when I spoke at last of Mr. Bridport's guilt, there was an expression of mingled indignation and anguish of soul, which methought might well be called something approaching to sublime; her countenance then scarcely seemed that of a mortal. "Yes, indeed, Mr. Danville," she said, "this gentleman's guilt must be terrible: but judge what it must cost me to be compelled to think so, when I tell you that there is one deception he has practised, of which you probably have not the least suspicion, that the very name by which he passes is a deception;—his name is not really Bridport, but Northington, —he is, alas!—my husband."

She paused here, nearly overcome with the emotions struggling within her, while I remained thunder-struck, wholly unable to utter a syllable—too much astonished and affected, even to utter an exclamation of astonishment. At length, resuming the power of speech, she

said: "Yes, indeed, it is but too true!—Would to God I could hide it from myself, could hide it from all the world! But to keep it secret is impossible, it must be known, it cannot but be known.—You seem, sir, to be much in the confidence of Mr. Armstrong's family; you seem to have a candid mind, united with sound principles of honour and morality, and will be able to enter into my feelings;—believe me, that amidst all the troubles of a life which has been far from a happy one, I never met with so severe a trial as this. If Mr. Northington has been an unkind husband to me, and that he has been so is matter of too great notoriety to pretend to conceal it, the attempt were even ridiculous; yet I never conceived him till now capable of conduct so atrocious; of an act of such deliberate treachery and dishonesty. At the call of duty, in which I hope no ill-usage on his part will ever make me remiss, I came hither the moment I heard of my husband's situation. If he have long cast me from him as a wife, I cannot consider his misconduct in this respect as dispensing with me from offering him the cares of a wife at a moment like the present, and they shall be faithfully discharged, at least till his returning senses empower him to decide for himself hether they shall be continued or not. It is proper

that all the further particulars I can myself impart to elucidate this affair, should be communicated to your friends, nor shall they be withheld; but excuse me, Mr. Danville, if I request that the communication may be made through you, that I may be spared the sight of your injured friend himself: that would be a trial which I have not sufficient fortitude to support. Let me ask, too, that what I have to say may be reserved to a future opportunity; at present, I hardly feel the power of dwelling longer upon the subject. Tomorrow, perhaps, or whenever it may be convenient, you will call again; I repeat it, that unless desired by my unfortunate husband, when his senses return, to quit him, I shall not stir from this house till I see him in a situation when my cares are no longer wanted."

She paused again.—I never felt myself so much at a loss for words—no common expressions of admiration were suited to conduct such as hers; I could think of none adequate to the expression of my feelings. It was besides not a little incomprehensible to me, that, knowing me only as she did, in the character of a coal-merchant's clerk, she should select me as the object in whom her confidence was to be placed on a matter of such importance. I stammered out a few incoherent sentences,

hardly knowing what I said; the result of which was, that I would take an early opportunity of complying with her wishes, and that she might depend upon my not showing myself unworthy of her confidence; but I verily believe I omitted to say any thing of being sensible of the honour, merely from being overpowered with a sense of it.

I called at Mrs. Corbett's lodgings. Her sister, who came down to speak to me, said that she was somewhat more composed, but not sufficiently so to see any one; and having thus discharged all the commissions on which I set out, I hastened back to the wharf to communicate my various adventures to my anxious friend. In relating my rencontre with Mrs. Northington, I however omitted the particulars which dwelt the most strongly on my mind with regard to this lady, that is, all that had any reference to the Armstrong family. I only mentioned in general terms what she had said of the soi-disant Mr. Bridport being her husband, and enlarged upon her kindness in coming to attend upon him notwithstanding his ill usage of her.

"Good God!" exclaimed Walter, "Mrs. Northington!—That was the name of the lady with whom Louisa Elliott lived."

"Louisa Elliott!" I replied, affecting not to recollect immediately whom he meant.

"Yes, yes," said Walter, "you cannot have forgotten that I once mentioned to you having met a charming creature of that name at a dance, the protégée of a Mrs. Northington. Good Heavens! what an extraordinary coincidence!—Ah, Sam! would that I had never known more with regard to Louisa, rather than that my further knowledge of her should be thrust upon me in such a way, rather than that she should know me under such hateful colours!—Yes, she was a charming creature, and I must now be despised by her!—Well, well, I deserve it!—As to you, Sam, I can never sufficiently express the deep sense I entertain of the obligations I owe you; yet I have one thing more to ask. You mentioned my going down to Langham. I have determined to follow your advice. In this hateful city, the scene of my folly and my shame, I can never more know repose; the affectionate att ntion of my father is the only thing that can ever restore tranquillity to my mind. My uncle is kind, very kind, it is impossible for any one to be more essentially so; but he is not my father, nor could I ever pour out the feelings of my soul to the one, as I

can to the other. But you must go with me, Sam; I cannot even see my father till he has first talked the matter over with you;—on your friendship I rely to break the ice for me. You shall deposit me under your own good father's roof till you have prepared mine for my reception, and then I shall meet him with greater confidence.—Will you, can you, do this?"

I thought indeed it was the best thing which could be done, and I freely consented to his request;—"But when would you go?" said I.

"Tomorrow," he replied.—"I cannot bear a moment's delay; a very short stay there will suffice for you, and you can then return and send me all my things from uncle Shelburne's, making the best excuse you can to him for my strange and abrupt departure; but London is loathsome to me, I am not easy till I am at a distance from it, and again under my dear paternal roof."

I had rather he would have permitted me one day more to prepare; it was now late in the evening, and all must be hurry and confusion: however, I was glad to get him down to Langham at any rate, and afraid of asking for a delay lest his purpose should be changed. I therefore declared my assent to what he said. "We will set off at six in the morning, Sam," he added; and to this also I assented.

But there were still some things necessary to be done before our departure. As yet Mr. Carberry was uninformed of the matter; so I hastened to impart it to him, and ask his permission to accompany Walter the next day. He expressed much concern for the affair, and said he thought I was right in consenting to be the companion of his journey; I had therefore his free leave to be absent as long as I found it desirable. I next went to Mr. Shelburne's to impart to him his nephew's resolution, and got such things as were absolutely necessary to carry down with us; and lastly, wrote a note of excuse to Mrs. Northington, that I was unexpectedly obliged to be out of town for a few days, but would wait upon her immediately on my return. Then ordering a chaise to be at the wharf the next morning at six o'clock, at that hour Walter and I were on our way to Langham.

CHAPTER X.

Minor delights forsaken to enjoy major ones, and a quondam favourite laid low.—Various exercises of locomotive and oratorical powers.—A new discovery in ornithology.—Maritime feats.—Feats in medicine equal to any yet recorded.

ARRIVED at Langham, I deposited my charge, as he desired, at the humble dwelling of my good parents. Papa was at this moment in the act of smoking his pipe in the chimney corner; a species of recreation which, in his estimate of the goods and ills of this world, ranked high on the list of the former. But the sound of Sam's well-known voice at this moment, unexpected as it was, had a more powerful influence upon his nerves than even the fumes of the tobacco; and springing from his seat, the pipe and its contents were thrown emphatically to the ground, where they lay a mingled mass of petty *molecules*, if not as to numbers absolutely infinite, yet too nearly so to admit of their being numbered, while in an instant my hand was pressed closely in his.

"Well, Sam, to be sure what can have happened? something bad, I'm afraid?"

"Not quite good, father; but," I added, with a wink, and drawing him aside, "sus-

pend your curiosity awhile, I entreat; 'tis an awkward circumstance with respect to Walter, which had better not be mentioned till you and I can talk it over in private. Let him stay here while I go to the rectory and prepare Mr. Armstrong to see him. But don't suppose, father, that he has been doing any thing very much amiss; one could have wished that the affair had not happened; yet there's no occasion to treat him as if he were in great disgrace."

"God forbid, Sam, that I should presume to think any thing about disgrace! And to be sure he's very welcome to be here as long as he pleases, and a great honour too that he thought of coming here, which so I'm sure my good old dame would think; but she's gone out to Ma'am Williams, there at the New Farm, upon the old story—there hav'n't been a better customer to Hannah ever since she set up business; and she was so monstrous big that every body expects there'll be twins this time, and so God knows when Hannah may be at home."

"Well, father, Mr. Walter can remain with you; but don't talk to him about Brighton."

"No, no, trust me for that.—What, I suppose 'tis something about that there matter as Mr. Armstrong sent one day to talk to me,

that time when we came away from Brighton?"

"Aye, aye, father; but hold your tongue;"—and then shaking Walter by the hand emphatically, he having thrown himself into a chair with somewhat of a desponding air, I set forwards to the rectory, though with a very heavy heart. I knew well

> That the first bringer of unwelcome news
> Has but a thankless office, and his tongue
> Sounds ever after like the sullen bell
> Remember'd knelling a departed friend;

and in some such light I was afraid my tongue must henceforward always appear to Mr. Armstrong, the messenger as I was now, for the second time, of news which must be very unwelcome to his ears. He was walking in his garden, and was just by the gate when I entered it.—"Good God, Samuel!" he exclaimed.

"Be not alarmed, sir, Walter is safe and well."

"Thank Heaven!—But the sight of you filled me with alarm.—Tell me, then, what has brought you thus unexpectedly hither?"

"It is indeed a matter which nearly concerns my friend; but let us, if you please, sir, go into the house before we enter upon it."

We proceeded immediately to his study; and taking our places on each side of the fire, I began my story, which I related in as mild colours as the circumstances would admit of. Mr. Armstrong heard me patiently, only now and then interrupting the narration with an expression of regret at that want of head which could make his son so easy a dupe, and of thankfulness that worse consequences had not ensued from it. But as yet I had proceeded no further than our return to the wharf, after our breakfast at Hampstead; my interview with Mrs. Northington was still to come. When I mentioned this circumstance, and the affecting manner in which she had acknowledged to me that the guilty man was her husband, and that his name was not Bridport but Northington, Mr. Armstrong started from his seat, exclaiming, "Mr. Northington! Merciful God!"—then sinking down again upon the chair, he threw his hands upon the table with an expression of unutterable agony, and hid his face in them.

I was thunderstruck. I looked at him earnestly for some minutes: "Good God, sir," I at length broke forth, "what can I have said that has affected you thus?"

He raised his head. "Oh, Samuel!" he said, "that name, you know not the ten thou-

sand daggers that the pronouncing it, accompanied with the rest of the story, has planted in my bosom!—I can scarcely breathe!—Hold awhile!—I shall then have questions without end to ask, but I must first recover this shock. Notwithstanding the long series of years that has elapsed since I had originally reason to deprecate the sound of that name, it still harrows up my soul."

"Great Heaven!" I exclaimed, while the singular circumstances which had attended the little knowledge I had hitherto acquired of Mrs. Northington, rushed like a whirlwind with tenfold force upon my mind.

"Samuel," Mr. Armstrong continued after awhile, "the name of Northington is connected with some circumstances of my life probably unknown to you, and very painful to me to think of. I could not restrain the emotion which seized me on hearing that name pronounced, attended with such circumstances. It is impossible to conceive my sensations on learning that the same man on whose account I had been deprived of the greatest happiness I could have known on this side the grave, was the wretch who had laid this horrible snare for my dear, my only child. I had perhaps but for this never imparted to you, indeed I never yet did impart to any one but to my poor lost

Eleanor, the particulars to which I now allude. I once thought that the anguish I had endured on this account, that my wrongs, shall I say, —ah, I know not whether I am justified in calling them so, perhaps she was more to be pitied than blamed throughout the whole affair—but I once thought that all which I had suffered on this account should be buried with myself in the peaceful grave. Subsequent circumstances led me to impart it to Eleanor, under an implied compact that the story was never to be mentioned. I never expected to have heard any thing more of either Mr. or Mrs. Northington, much less to have all that I have suffered on account of that most angelic of women renewed thus painfully.—You have then seen her, Samuel?"

"Indeed I have, sir, and not for the first time when this unfortunate affair led me into her company."

"Ha!—how so?"

"Excuse me, sir, I am perhaps talking with a freedom unbecoming my situation when considered with regard to yours; yet what you have said encourages me to impart some other particulars with regard to this lady, which very much struck me when they passed; they have indeed made an impression upon my mind which can never be effaced; but they are

known to no one but myself, they have never been mentioned even to your son."

"You astonish me, Samuel, speak on."

I then related first what I had observed at the Shakespeare Gallery; and afterwards the astonishment excited in me, when, calling upon her on business, I had seen his picture, for I could scarcely doubt that it was his, hanging up in her room. But above all I dwelt upon the evident interest with which she put so many questions to me concerning the Armstrong family, when she heard the name of Armstrong mentioned in conjunction with that of her guilty husband; concluding with mentioning her request that I would call upon her again to learn the particulars of the affair as far as she was acquainted with them: this I added it was my intention to do, immediately on my return to London.

"Ha!" said Mr. Armstrong, "then she does still take an interest in the name?"

"Indeed it appeared to me that she took a very deep one. But, pardon me, sir, it should seem then that she is well known to you?"

"But too well!"

"Thence doubtless arose her extreme attention to Walter, her earnest examination of his countenance, and the eagerness with which she listened to his expressions of rapture at the

pictures; she was struck with his strong resemblance to you, with the similarity she found between the sound of your voices."

"No doubt."—Again he paused, lost in reflection for a few minutes, then said—"But we are wasting time, Samuel; hasten and bring my poor Walter hither. I long to see him, and assure him of my sincere forgiveness, and regret at the hands into which he had so unfortunately fallen. Tomorrow, Samuel, unless you wish not to delay even for one day your return, I will tell you some particulars, which it is become expedient to impart to you. An extraordinary coincidence of circumstances has occasioned your knowing so much, that it is now better you should know all."

I hastened back then with the excellent rector's kind message to his son, and in a few minutes after left them weeping together, judging that the presence of a third person would, under such circumstances, only be irksome to them.

"Well, Sam," said my father, when I had seated myself in the parlour, which was now always used whenever I arrived,—"Well, Sam, so I'm afraid young Mr. Walter has been a little slippery? Ah! he never was, nor ever will, be so steady as you, if he live to be as old as Methusalem."

"A little imprudent it must be owned he has been, father; he had nearly concluded a very unfortunate marriage, but it has happily been put an end to: he was, however, in consequence very desirous of coming down to his father's; but was afraid to see him till the story had been told by me, and he had received his father's assurance that he would be ready to forgive him."

"And for certain such a good father as Mr. Armstrong is wouldn't refuse to forgive his child. Besides, you know, Sam, there wasn't much in it, as the thing was not actually done."

This was certainly good casuistry on the part of my honoured parent, and would probably not at any time have been without its advocates in many a bosom, statesman's as well as mechanic's: or, if in the year one thousand eight hundred and three, the currency of his opinion, *that it is the* ACCOMPLISHMENT, *not the* INTENT, *which constitutes the guilt of an action*, might be doubted; since the year one thousand eight hundred and eight, when it was advanced by persons in much higher stations, and sanctioned by the vote of an important branch of the legislative body, it must be beyond dispute received into the established code of morals. Whether, if the Houses of Convocation had continued their sittings to that time, they would

have concurred in such a vote, it is impossible to decide. There certainly is an awkward passage in a book considered as of some authority in the island of Great Britain, which seems a little adverse to this convenient principle: "*But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart*;" and it may be rather a matter of speculation how this passage and the aforesaid vote are to be reconciled. There can, however, be no doubt that they are reconcileable, though all persons are not sufficient theologians to be acquainted with the important *how*. Indeed, I could not at that time account to myself very satisfactorily for my father's having adopted an axiom so much apparently in opposition to the precepts of a book which he venerated exceedingly. But I have since supposed that he must have been intuitively gifted with this reconciling power, not then generally discovered. It seemed indeed to me for a long time so strange an anomaly in my father's character, that I doubted whether I should record the circumstance, fearful lest it should bring his general honesty and soundness of principle into question. But since his opinion has been sanctioned by such high authority, there seems no reason why the circumstance should be suppressed; nay, it must

rather be considered as redounding to his honour that he had so early made a discovery which was not made by his betters till five years after.

However, not being then so much enlightened upon these subjects as I am now, I was rather startled with the position, nor could forbear exclaiming emphatically, "Father!!!"

"Nay, Sam," he replied, "I only meant, that since Mr. Walter hadn't been so unlucky as quite to get married, 'twouldn't be so bad as if he was; for you know what could he do with a wife, poor thing, at his age?" My good father seemed here not to recollect that Walter was but one year younger than myself, and that more than a year had elapsed since he had been exceedingly disposed to put me into the *unlucky* situation of being fettered with a wife. "But as to his being to blame, to think of marrying without his dear papa's consent, why that to be sure every body must think,—only 'tisn't quite so bad as if the mischief had been done and over, and never could be undone again. But lawk, Sam, Mr. Walter have been telling me another piece of news, which to be sure I was very much surprised to hear it, that both the Miss Fentons is run away. One they think is gone to get married to a young man who's only mate of one of Mr. Carberry's ships, which I suppose that is a very poor thing

for husband to such ladies as they are; t'other they think is only gone to keep her sister company."

"Very true, father; they both went off yesterday morning."

"Well, that is extraordinary to be sure, that young ladies brought up as they have been, and having such pretty fortins, which certainly five or six thousand pound is a pretty fortin, should think of demeaning themselves to go off with only a mate of a ship! And, into the bargain, Mr. Walter says his father is nothing but a working ship carpenter,—not even a master carpenter." My good father seemed here again visited by a little lapse of memory, and to have entirely forgotten that he had himself been very eager to marry one of them to a young man who was only the son of a blacksmith. "To be sure, their poor papa and mamma must take on finely about it. But nigh hand they've sent after 'em to catch 'em if they can before 'tis too late."

"Only 'tis unfortunate that the carriage in which they are gone is not so easily traced as a chaise with four horses, or a mail coach."

"And that's another strange thing, for to go off in such a mean thing as a coal ship. To be sure, for that matter a ship is an extraordinary curious thing; which I was quite surprised when

I was at Brighton, that being the first time as ever I see a ship except what is at London Bridge, and then I wasn't aboard none of them; no more I should have been at Brighton, only as I happened to be talking promiscuously upon the beach with a sailor man as belonged to his majesty's sloop of war the *Curry-Goose*, I think the man called it, which I never could understand what he could mean by a *Curry-Goose*, for my old Hannah she have had many different kinds of geese, to try which throve best, and which was the most profitable, in order to keep to that; because you know, Sam, the Scripture says, '*Prove all things; hold fast that which is good:*' but of all the geese that Hannah ever had, she never had one of that name. So when I heard the man talk of the *Curry-Goose*, I asked him what that meant; which he said he supposed it was some French kind of thing: because it was a ship taken from the French, which you know, Sam, we have taken a great many ships from them, thank God. But perhaps, as you can read French, you know what the *Curry-Goose* means. Well, I was talking to the sailor man that belonged to the ship, and asking him about one thing and another thing, so then he says, says he, 'What! did you never see a ship?'—So I told him, 'Never;' which he seemed to think

that mighty odd. 'Well, to be sure!' he said, 'lived to your time of life and never see a ship!' So, 'Well', says he, we're going off, I and my comrades, I expect them down every minute; and we shall come back again in half an hour: and if you'll go with us, you shall have as good a biscuit and glass of grog as ever you tasted in your life.' Which I thanked him very much, for he seemed quite a civil, honest, hearty fellow; and so his comrades coming, I got in with them. And sure enough when we got there they made me as welcome as if they'd known me all their lives. But as for their biscuit and their grog I can't say I fancied them much; though I think it was very curious to see a ship, which that is the only time that I ever saw one: but for all that I think it is but a poor kind of a place for ladies."

How much longer my father might have expatiated on his maritime feats at Brighton I cannot tell; for though I heard him, it was with my attention fixed upon very different objects, and without the least though or wish of putting in a word; but just at this moment entered his old dame, little dreaming who she was to see there. "Why, Bob," she exclaimed on entering, and not finding her better half at his station in the chimney corner as she expected, —"why, Bob, where are you?"—"Here,"

cried Bob from the parlour, "and somebody else as you little thinks of."

"Well for goodness! little enough to be sure!—Sam, who should have thought of finding you here?"

I then explained to her, as I had done to my father, that I was come down with Mr. Walter, and should only stay the next day. "Well, well," she said, "we must thank God for that, if we can't have no more." My father then inquired after the good lady that she had been attending, whether folks had guessed right, and she had twins? To this my mother answered, "No, thank God! only one, but a brave boy as ever was seen. There's quite a piece of work, however, and to do in the farm-yard," she said; "and you know when Ma'am Williams is laid by, things does go a little sideways, as you may say. sometimes. There's the little black cow, she have calved; and the red crumpledy-horn cow, they expects she'll calve to-night; and both cows they can't be in the cow-house together, for then as sure as two-pence they'd go to fighting, and there's only one barn empty, and the little mare's there ready to foal, and they can't leave the red cow out to calve in the yard; and so as the black cow have calved, and 't'a'nt a very cold night, only a little windy and frosty, they thinks it's

best to put black cow out, as she have calved, and they wanted me to go and ax Ma'am Williams about it, for you know Jim Williams, he's but a poor one to do for himself; but no, says I, Ma'am Williams is but just laid, and she have had a sharp time, God knows, and nobody shan't go and disturb her now, as long as I am Hannah Danville, about no cows nor nonsense; so they've turned the little black cow out, and put the crumpledy in, which I don't think Ma'am Williams would like it at all if she know'd it."

"And then," interrupted my father, "if the poor dumb creature should catch cold, and be ill, as sure as sixpence they'll send for that sniggering fellow Harry Rix, who knows no more about doctoring than the donkey that he rides I say riding on a donkey for a man that pretends to be a doctor, such a mean animal as that! Well, for that matter I never was so surprised in my life as when I see the ladies at Brighton, quite fine ladies, riding donkeys. Sure, thought I, if I was a lady I'd see the donkeys all at the further end of the world before I'd ride such a mean thing. I could never have thought they'd been real ladies, only dressed up wenches, if I had not been told that they were quite real ones, and titled ladies too, some of 'em. And for that matter it's quite as

bad to my thinking for any body that pretends to be a doctor to ride one; but as for Harry Rix, for any thing that he knows about doctoring, 'tis no matter what he rides."

Now this Harry Rix was a doctor to the brute creation, lately set up in the next village, as a rival to my father; and his wife being cousin to Jim Williams's cousin's cousin, or something of an affinity of that kind, Jim had more than once for cousinship's sake called him in when his farm-yard was not in a perfect state of sanity, to the great annoyance of my father, who considered the admission of any other doctor into the parish of Langham, as absolute poaching on his manor. He had, therefore, no small satisfaction whenever Harry was so unfortunate as to lose a patient, a pleasure which he had received every time Harry had been called in by that same Jim. Equal satisfaction had not been conveyed to Ma'am Williams by her cousin's attendance, since in consequence of it the farm-yard was minus one horse, two sheep, three pigs, and an excellent shepherd's dog; and she had declared on the last misadventure, which was the poor dog, that Harry should never set foot in their yard again for all the cousins in the world.

Fortunate was it therefore for Jim that she

was laid by at this moment, for the cow was really found very ill in the morning in conse-sequence of the sapient determination that she should be dislodged from the cowhouse for the night. It was necessary, then, that recourse should be had to some advice; and Jim took advantage of his wife's total ignorance of what was passing, to send once more for his friend, and the friend of mortality, Harry Rix. Harry pronounced that poor Blackey had only caught cold; that she must be bled, and have a good saucepan full of hot gruel, with a pint of ale, and a good spoonful or two of ginger boiled in it, poured down her throat. The remedy was immediately prepared, the blood taken from her, and the loss supplied by the hot potion; after which Harry directed that she should be covered up as she lay tolerable thick with good horse litter that she might get into a sweat, and she would soon be well. It being fortunately Sunday morning, and the parish quite at leisure, the cow's indisposition soon drew a number of attendants round her, all eager to assist Jim and Harry in the proper administration of the remedies which the profound wisdom of the latter judged proper to prescribe. Blackey was then covered up thick with litter, but had not lain long before first one of the assembled

spectators, then another, just removed the litter a little to see whether she had yet got into a sweat or not, to the greater disadvantage of the animal, inasmuch, as the day was as bitter a March day, with a sharp east wind, as the most determined advocate for cold weather could wish.

As Blackey therefore could not very conveniently get into a sweat while the cold air was so repeatedly permitted to peep in upon her, it was soon pronounced that the gruel had not had proper effect, and something stronger must be given; so she had a little warm ale without any gruel to dilute it; and in order to imbibe the ale, it was necessary to throw the litter entirely off, that she might be raised, and have her head held in the proper position for the ale to be poured down. To work then went some half dozen of the spectators, and in an instant the litter was all cleared away; and to promote the sweat, which, alone, Dr. Rix pronounced could cure her, she was exposed entriely to the cold wind. In short, she was tormented in this way for some hours; till Doctress Danville, going to visit her lying-in patient, and finding her extremely well, so that there seemed no danger to be apprehended from the history of the poor cow being imparted to her, she ventured to relate it. Ma'am

Williams certainly did apply some pretty severe epithets to poor Jim upon the occasion; and summoning him into her presence, a mandate which he did not dare to refuse, she authoritatively commanded him to send that fellow Rix, away immediately. Odd! if she had been well enough, she'd have come and sent him away with a flea in his ear, that's what she would! But go he should, she said:—"So mind, Jim, what I say, pack him off, and send for Bob Danville; pray God it mayn't be too late!"

The prayers of saints may have their efficacy according to the belief of the pious; but Ma'am Williams was not a saint, and her prayers had none. Harry Rix received his mandate of dismission with resignation, and obeyed it without delay, perhaps not very much concerned to turn over his patient to another, that she might not die under his hands, since it began to be pretty obvious that her life was very near its close; while a message was sent to Dr. Danville, requesting that he would graciously condescend to come and repair, if possible, the errors of his rival. "Yes, I'll go and look at the poor beast, with all my heart," said he, "to oblige Madam Williams, and out of compassion to a poor creature that can't help itself; but its ten to one but what Harry has already

done so much mischief, that all the doctors in the world couldn't do her no good."

Nor was he much mistaken, for he actually found poor Blackey in the last extremity; it was very evident that she could not long survive the pains that had been taken to dispatch her. "You may give her a dram or two of jalap if you please," said the new doctor, "to try what that will do; but to my thinking, the kindest thing would be to put an end to her at once, for I don't believe its now in the power even of jalap to save her; and she seems in sad misery, poor thing." Jim said he'd ask his wife what he should do, "and you had better go with me Bob," says he, "for she'll mind you more than she will me." They went therefore together, to the lying-in chamber, where they found the lady not at all in the delicate state to which the more refined part of the fair sex are subject under similar circumstances; for she gave poor Jim a matrimonial lecture with as much energy as she could possibly have done, had it been the second month, instead of only the second day, after her confinement; ending, however, with saying, "that it should be just as Bob Danville thought best about killing the poor beast at once, for nobody could be a better judge." This, Bob

heard with no little degree of satisfaction; she had taken him on a side on which he certainly was very sensible of a little titilation. He repeated his opinion, that it was impossible the cow could live, and it was therefore kinder to kill her at once; she was accordingly offered up immediately a victim to the poor discarded Æsculapius.

CHAPTER XI.

A short chapter, yet containing some important matter.

THOUGH there could scarcely in general be any set of people more regular in their attendance upon the church service than the parishioners of Langham, yet the important concern of watching Jim Williams's little black cow had this Sunday occasioned a trifling defalcation in the usual numbers. And it was much to their own loss; for though I had often heard Mr. Armstrong very eloquent from the pulpit, I never heard him equally so. He preached from the well-known text in St. John's Gospel; "*He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.*" Taking occasion from the example here placed before us, to recommend, in the strongest manner, a general habit of candour and forbearance towards the faults of each other.

I felt, indeed, particularly interested by the discourse, since it struck me that the preacher was, at least, partially inspired by his own actual situation with regard to his son; he had at least certainly been practising in an exemplary manner towards his failings, the forbearance he recommended. Neither could I wholly

resist speculating whether he might not mean, in a certain degree, to arraign himself as having been too hasty, when in our conversation the day before, he talked of wrongs towards himself as connected with Mrs. Northington. He had indeed checked himself almost immediately, and observed, that she was perhaps rather to be pitied than blamed; a proposition to which I was disposed to assent internally, with some eagerness, since there was something in her manner which impressed me so forcibly with that kind of respect, amounting almost to veneration, that I could scarcely conceive it possible for any part of her conduct to be a just subject of censure. In short, it appeared to me that Mr. Armstrong felt many passages in his excellent discourse peculiarly applicable to his own situation at the moment; that this had probably led to his then selecting it, and had rendered him more than usually eloquent in its delivery.

I passed an hour with Walter before church, when he said he could not sufficiently rejoice in the determination he had made, to come down to Langham. "Sam," said he, "never was such a man surely as my father! how is it that I am for ever doomed to create uneasiness to a heart like his?—O, that I could devise some means of occupation which might

be pursued without again quitting his counsels and guidance! I should be sure then never to go wrong. (Walter forgot that it was while under his father's guidance he had adopted the idea of becoming a painter, very contrary to his counsels and wishes.) He has consented, Sam, to my remaining here at present, and says we can talk over our plans for the future, at leisure, and when our minds shall be more composed. Here, therefore, I shall remain till something is determined; and in order that my time may not be wholly lost, I shall, under his direction, enter upon a course of study, such as he wished me to have pursued long ago, which will lay a foundation of general knowledge that cannot fail of proving eminently useful to me in whatever way of life I may ultimately engage. I am really ashamed, Sam, when I think how lamentably deficient in information I am from the idleness of my youth, upon a variety of subjects which ought to be familiar to a lad of fourteen. But my eyes, thank Heaven, are opened to a full sense of my errors, and I trust that they will now be fully repaired. Yet, I have one thing to say, in which surely even you will not condemn me; I cannot forbear being anxious to hear whatever may hereafter transpire, from any of the parties concerned, relative to my unfortu-

nate affair, and shall rely upon your friendship to communicate them. As to any lingering remains of attachment to that unfortunate woman, believe me, none exist. I view the whole matter in its proper light; I feel deeply for the wrongs of the injured husband; but surely it is not unnatural to wish to know the result of the whole."

"Most undoubtedly not. It would be strange indeed, if you had not such a desire; and believe me, nothing shall be omitted on my part to procure the most ample elucidation of the story."

We had a good deal more conversation, in which, among other things he said, that though it gave him some pain to appear so fickle and capricious, yet that painting must be abandoned. It would be for ever associated in his mind with the late unhappy transactions, since it was the love of painting which induced his wish for the journey that had led to them; and the continuance of the pursuit would be a constant memento of his folly, which he had not fortitude sufficient to encounter. He questioned, he said, whether he should ever be able to resort to it again even as an amusement; certainly not, for a very long time: what he should do, in short, he was entirely at a loss to conjecture. He earnestly entreated me to write to him fre-

quently, assuring me that nothing could ever diminish his regard for me; it was even greatly increased by my late kindness and indulgence to his weakness and follies. He concluded by taking my hand with an expression of regard, which brought tears into my eyes.

After church, the conference between Mr. Armstrong and myself was renewed, when he related to me all the particulars he had communicated to his sister Eleanor, on her consulting him with regard to Mr. Carberry's proposals. These, though related there as their most proper place, were not known to me till the period of my history at which I am now arrived. He concluded the relation with saying; "But though I imparted my story to Eleanor, I did not even to her, mention either the lady's family name, or that to which she changed it by marriage; from you, any attempt to conceal them, would be idle. That she bears at present, you already know, for you must have seen that she can be no other than Mrs. Northington; to her family name you are probably an entire stranger,—it was Westbourne."

"Westbourne!" I exclaimed.—"Good heavens!"

"You seem struck with the name, Samuel; —do you then know any thing particular relating to it?"

"Indeed I do, sir; but perhaps the circumstances ought not to be mentioned;—the exclamation escaped me unawares."

"You think, perhaps, that what you have to say would be wounding to me?"

"Indeed, I fear so."

"No, Samuel, you can scarcely tell me any thing that could wound me more than I have often been wounded already, and I had rather hear all. I know that I have been severely censured by some of Mrs. Northington's connections, nor can my heart acquit me of deserving some censure; yet, they have said things which were wholly unjustifiable."

I then related to him what my father had mentioned in one of his letters, respecting a Shropshire gentleman of the name of Westbourne, who had once come to see Langham church, and the reflection he had taken occasion to make upon his character, in looking at the monument to Mrs. Armstrong. I concluded with saying, "Most probably, sir, this gentleman was nearly connected with Mrs. Northington."

"Her brother, I have no doubt; and the visit to the church was with a view to a work he is about to publish upon church architecture at different periods in our history. I know that this gentleman has been very severe

upon my conduct, and allowed himself, at various times, to hold very unjustifiable propositions with regard to it; of such a nature, indeed, that if they had not regarded one who was alike by his principles and his profession, precluded from calling him to account in the way that *honour*, to make use of the common term, is presumed imperiously to require, must have involved him in more than one duel. They might have involved him in an action at law; but I thought it equally derogatory to the character of Mrs. Northington and myself, to expose either to the strictures which giving so much publicity to an affair of the kind must necessarily occasion. I therefore never opposed any thing to his calumnies but a dignified silence, and a conduct which I have always endeavoured to render as little reprehensible as possible. He is an ill-judging, hot-headed man; with a mind wholly remote from that dignity which shines so conspicuously in his sister's. I am afraid that his intemperance was principally instrumental in precipitating my Anastasia into her unfortunate marriage, for I cannot conceive that she could ever really attach herself to such a man as Mr. Northington."

"You know him then, sir,"

"I frequently saw him during the summer that I was down at Ludlow, but always dis-

liked him. He might be at that time about five or six-and-twenty, and I plainly perceived was deeply smitten with Miss Westbourne; indeed, in the course of the summer, his proposals were formally made to her. She gave him a very decided refusal, notwithstanding that it was in point of fortune what might be called a very great match for her. He had a large property in the neighbourhood of Ludlow, and a very good house about two miles from the town; while the commonly received opinion was, that Miss Westbourne's fortune could not be more than three thousand pounds. Mr. Northington was besides of a very ancient and respectable family. The house, and a part of the estates, were entailed; but he had a considerable landed property, and a large sum of money entirely at his own disposal, and he offered her a *carte-blanche* as to her settlement. Her friends were much hurt at the match being refused, and took infinite pains to induce her to retract the refusal, but could not succeed. I afterwards learned that his offers were subsequently renewed on more than one occasion, but with no better success; and I was therefore the more astonished, when I found at last that she was really united to him. From many things which have since come to my knowledge, I have reason to fear that she yield-

ed her own judgement and inclinations to the importunities of her friends; and I am sure if they have any feeling, the treatment she has received from Mr. Northington, must occasion them many a severe self-reproach for their interference. A near connection of hers, has, as I have been informed, alleged in his justification that he should never have interfered, if he had not conceived that he saw me trifling with her, and was piqued at the idea.

"Indeed the loss of such a woman as Mrs. Northington has not been the only loss I have had to regret in consequence of this unfortunate affair: it was this I am afraid which occasioned also my losing the friendship of one to whom I owed very great obligations, and whose friendship I considered as of inestimable value. My obligations to him were such, that I can truly say, no subsequent unkindness on his part has ever been able to erase them from my mind, but the grateful recollection of them will accompany me to the grave. I am perfectly sensible, I feel indeed but too deeply, that I was guilty of many errors in judgement in my conduct with regard to Mrs. Northington, yet I must think that the view he took of it was unreasonably severe. At the same time I am ready to make all possible allowance for

the very different light in which matters of this kind appear to others and to ourselves. They do not know the motives by which we are influenced, it is often indeed impossible to explain them in such a way as to make them appear to others in the same point of view that they do to ourselves; they must have our own feelings, must be exactly in our own situation, or they cannot receive the same impressions that we do. Of this I have always been so sensible, that I am far from entirely condemning conduct which I never can cease deeply to regret. But perhaps the time is come when all things will be explained, and the matter placed in its true light; many years have elapsed in which the minds on all sides have had time to cool, and leisure has been given for reflection; things which then appeared to deserve the severest censure, may now be contemplated in a milder point of view. It is seldom that that kind Providence who so paternally watches over us, suffers in such cases error for ever to prevail, but makes the truth evident at last, if we only wait with patience the time he has appointed for bringing it to light."

Much more was said upon this interesting subject which it is needless here to repeat; and the conclusion was an injunction from the

father, no less forcible than I had received from the son, faithfully to impart to him the sequel of this extraordinary affair.

One more visit which I made during my present stay at Langham must not be omitted. Mr. Conway happened to be down for a few days, and seeing me at church, he seemed purposely to wait at the door to speak to me. This he did with the greatest kindness, inviting me besides to come and see him at the hall. I replied, with many acknowledgements for the honour conferred, that I was going away in the evening, intending to be in town again early the next morning. He obligingly answered, "but if your father can spare you, you could call in after the evening prayers." I bowed, and renewing my acknowledgements, said, I would certainly accept the invitation. I accordingly went, and it was impossible for any one to be received in a more polite and obliging manner. He made many inquiries respecting my situation and my future prospects; talked to me on subjects of literature, and showed me some curious and rare books which he had recently added to his library, so that an hour passed before I was aware of it. Then making my apologies that I was afraid I had intruded upon him an unreasonable time, I took my leave.

This was one of the very delightful moments of my father's life; the more so, because he said, "though to be sure there could n't be a greater honour than for such a gentleman as Mr. Conway to take notice of a blacksmith's son, yet the greatest pleasure of all was, to think that it was all along of my own good behaviour; that made the honour much greater than if it was out of mere civility, and nothing could be a greater comfort to a parent." His blessing at parting was therefore given with increased emphasis and delight. I thought too that Mr. Armstrong's shake by the hand was even more kind than usual; and I departed, with every reason to be satisfied that I had done right in taking the journey.

CHAPTER XII.

The confessions of a penitent.—Much light thrown upon some very dark transactions.—Conjugal happiness exemplified.

When I arrived in town, after relating to Mr. Carberry and Mr. Shelburne, as the persons most interested in my journey, the satisfactory issue of it, my next object was to see Mrs. Northington. All that I had learned during my absence with respect to this lady, rendered her ten times more interesting to me, made me ten times more anxious to see, and, if possible, to serve her.

I found her still with her husband in Bedford Row. She told me with unfeigned pleasure, that his senses began to return the evening after I saw her, and were perfectly restored the following morning, he having then a thorough recollection of all that had passed till he broke away from me at St. Andrew's church. She said that he was strongly affected at seeing her by his bedside, and expressed the deepest contrition not only for the part he had taken in this scandalous transaction, "for, alas, Mr. Danville!" she said, "so he called it, and so I am compelled to call it; but also, for the whole of his conduct towards her ever since

their union. But," she added, " he wishes much, sir, that you should have his confession from his own lips; will you consent to see him?"

I replied, most certainly; and then inquired what the surgeon's opinion was with regard to his state? She answered, that he said it was extremely difficult to form an opinion upon it. " He has little doubt," she added, " from many symptoms that there is some material injury within, and unless the nature of it could be accurately ascertained, they must be very much in the dark with regard to the remedies that ought to be applied. He must, therefore, be considered as in great, though perhaps not in very immediate danger."

She then said, that she would, with my permission, go and prepare her husband for the interview with me, as he was anxious that it should take place as soon as possible, lest he might again be deprived of his senses. She accordingly went, and soon returning, said that he seemed to feel warm emotions, both of satisfaction, and of agony of mind, at hearing that I was in the house: but at length begged her to assure me that he considered his accident, and the state in which he then was, " and indeed, Anastasia," he said, " my sufferings are great, but assure Mr. Danville, that I consider

the whole as a kind dispensation of Heaven to awaken me to penitence, and a sense of my guilt. Let me then see him, that through him my confession may be conveyed to the young man whom I sought to injure so cruelly; it is the only reparation now in my power to make."

I went upstairs, and approaching his bed-side, he opened his eyes and cast them upon me. O Heavens! what a contrast was there between the object I then beheld, and the Mr. Bridport whom I had first seen at Brighton! —The victim of pain and suffering, of contrition and remorse; his whole appearance was so changed that it was not without difficulty he was to be recognised as the same person.

" Sir," said he, as his eyes met mine, " it is to you I owe my present state; had you not prevented my departure on the fatal morning of Friday last, I had not been compelled to the struggle which occasioned my fall, and might still, though thwarted in one diabolical scheme, have been planning another. I thank Heaven, I thank you, sir, as the instrument of Heaven, that this has been ordered otherwise. Sit down I intreat;—I have much to confess, but my confession made, I shall quit the world with a less troubled conscience. My Anastasia will you retire; I shall speak more freely left alone

with this young man." Mrs. Northington immediately complied, and withdrew.

"Mr. Danville," the penitent proceeded, "you seem the confidential friend of the Armstrong family, and are probably, therefore, not now to learn that there was a period in the lives of Mr. Bernard Armstrong, and of my much-wronged wife, when it appeared the idea of both, it certainly was that of my Anastasia's connections, that they entertained a mutual partiality for each other; when it was expected that Mr. Armstrong's heart and hand would one day be offered to an object for whom he was thought to show a very decided preference. I had long admired this lovely woman, even before she became acquainted with Mr. Armstrong, but admired her only in silence. We were both young, and I wished to be better acquainted with her disposition before my proposals were formally made. Alas! under this idea I delayed the matter too long. Till she knew Mr. Armstrong, her heart was disengaged; and even if I could not have inspired her with a strong attachment, my offers would probably not have been rejected. Nor can I even now help flattering myself that if I had been united to her before the foundations of that jealousy, which afterwards distracted my mind, were laid, I might have been able to

render her happy, and have been happy myself. But Mr. Armstrong was no sooner known to her, than her heart was entirely devoted to him; and while she saw reason to entertain a hope that their attachment was mutual, no other person would have had any chance of being listened to by her. Notwithstanding, then, that my offers were repeatedly renewed, since my passion for her was unabated, and that her friends pleaded strongly in my behalf; her brother in particular, urging my ample fortune, the handsome establishment she would have in the world as my wife, with many things which have usually a powerful influence over the female mind; she was indifferent to them all, and my offers were steadily rejected.

" Thus things went on year after year; my ardour to possess her was still unsubdued: but as she hoped that time would enable Mr. Armstrong to come to some explanation, every other consideration was sacrificed to that favourite idea. For some years it was obvious that it was not in his power to marry; but at length his accession to a valuable living seemed to remove all difficulty on the score of income. Still, however, no advances were made on his part; but as long as he had his sisters on his hands, she satisfied herself that he only waited

till they were disposed of. The eldest sister, however, married; the second died; and the third, it was universally reported, had long been engaged to a young man, the son of a clergyman in the nighbourhood; yet still no offer came. Despair now began to supersede her long cherished hopes; and they were finally extinguished by a report which soon after reached her, and which seemed to come from the very best authority, that Mr. Armstrong was on the point of being married to a young lady in the neighbourhood, to whom he had been attached ever since he had lived there. I thought this a favourable opportunity for making one more effort; but determined, if again unsuccessful, that it should be my last: she, however, either subdued by my constancy and unabated attachment, or unable any longer to resist the persuasions of her friends, yielded to my wishes. Her consent once obtained, I urged the speediest conclusion possible of the affair. I desired her to make her own demands, that they should be complied with implicitly. To possess her was all I asked. Thus almost without giving her a moment's leisure for reflection, matters were concluded, and our hands joined.

"For some weeks I was perfectly intoxicated with my happiness; and the object for which

I had so long sighed, appeared every day more and more charming in my eyes. But after a while this delirium began to subside, and to the rapture of possession succeeded the mortification of reflection. If I had indeed been the first object of my wife's affections, I believe it would scarcely have been possible for her to satisfy my heart by any return of affection she could make. But I was too well aware of the state of her sentiments; she had dealt candidly with me, and plainly told me she had a prior attachment, though now a hopeless one; but she never gave a hint with respect to the object of it. That, however, was needless; from what I had myself seen, I could have no doubt to whom she alluded. Conscious, then, that I was but half, if at all loved, the fiend jealousy soon began to obtrude itself between me and the happiness I had expected; nor could all the efforts of this admirable woman to supply, by the kindest assiduities, by the most unremitted attention, the want of affection, and to deceive me, if possible, into a belief that I was dear to her, inspire me with the confidence necessary to resist my bitter enemy. Indifference to her it was impossible for me to feel: the moment that the delirium of passion began to subside, the transition was rapid to complete disgust; and this feeling was soon carried as

much beyond the bounds of reason as the other had been.

"Instead of being decreased by the exemplary conduct of my wife, and amidst all my ill-usage of her, that her conduct was exemplary, has never been denied by me: but my disgust instead of being diminished by it daily increased. I should have felt less incensed against her, if she had given me more occasion to find fault, for my own conduct would not then have appeared so entirely unjustifiable; and I wished nothing so much as that by some false step on her part, my alienation from her might be in some measure vindicated in the eyes of the world. Another thing which contributed not a little to cherish this alienation was, that she brought me no children: this was a cruel disappointment and mortification to me; since a part of my property, with the family mansion, was intailed, and in case of my dying childless, was to go to a distant relation with whom I had long been at variance. My vindictive spirit could never forgive an offence I had received from him, when we were both lads at school. I had never spoken to him since; and it seemed as if my wife was in a conspiracy with him to mortify and humiliate me.

"I looked, however, in vain for any misconduct on the part of the devoted Anastasia.

During ten years that we lived together she never gave me any just cause to insist upon the separation on which by that time I was fully resolved. I then told her in plain terms that I would not live with her any longer; that she should have an ample allowance and handsome establishment wherever she chose, but we must from that moment be perfect strangers to each other. I never wished to hear more of her, and hoped that she never again would hear of me. She had nothing to do but to draw on my steward regularly for the allowance that I had awarded her; she would always find her draughts duly answered. Every argument, every entreaty was urged by her to dissuade me from my purpose, but I was inexorable. I told her that I would always justify her with regard to her moral conduct, if I should ever hear it arraigned; but that I could not live any longer with one in whose affections, by her own confession, I had no share.

"Thus then we separated. She established herself in London, where she has lived respectable and respected, receiving her annuity with the utmost regularity;—the only part of my conduct in which she has had no reason to upbraid me. My life has ever since been a scene of restlessness and wandering; not unchequered with occasional starts of meritorious conduct,

though to them has been opposed a dreadful counterbalance of oftentimes detestable villany: endeavouring to fly from a deeply-wounded spirit, but always bearing about with me the arrow rankling in the wound, and aggravating the smart.

"As it was impossible for me to doubt that the disappointment I had experienced originated in my wife's having attached herself so strongly to Mr. Armstrong, in proportion as the cruel jealousy which had taken possession of me became a fixed principle in my soul, he became the object of a feeling, which I scarcely know how to qualify by any epithet that will give a just idea of it. It was an aversion that knew no bounds. I cannot describe the sensation it gave me to hear the name pronounced: the idea that he must continue to inhabit the same world as myself was hateful to me to a degree that no words can express. The prevailing sentiment of my soul has been a thirst for some opportunity of retaliating my own sufferings upon him, by exercising towards him some terrible species of revenge. It has been an absolute phrensy; one for which, if known, I ought to have been kept in close confinement: but with the cunning of phrensy I always kept my secret safely locked in my bosom; it has never till now been imparted to any one.

"I cannot describe the sensations I experienced when I heard that the name of one of the young men who had rescued my reputed niece from the danger she was in at Brighton was Armstrong. My first impression was to wish that I had been upon the spot to have given him a secret thrust down the cliff, which in the bustle and confusion could have been made to appear the mere effect of chance. That he bore such a name was enough to inspire this wish, though I did not then know of his near connection with my tormentor. A new idea, however, soon took possession of me. From the first visit paid me by this young man I saw that he seemed much smitten with my companion; and when by artful and insidious inquiries I had ascertained from his own mouth that he was the son of the detested Bernard Armstrong, I formed my plans accordingly. What they were the event has sufficiently explained. Any other heart than mine, in considering the circumstances that had put my victim into my power, would have paused awhile at least ere he gave way to such a spirit: but I never hesitated a moment. I pursued my plan in the most artful manner; and with a steadiness and perseverance which never admitted a thought of relaxation, till I flattered myself that I was arrived at the point,

when by the dagger I was aiming at the heart of the son, I should mortally wound that of the father;—when I should see that father taste with redoubled bitterness the cup of gall of which I had drunk so deeply.

"Among the instances of detestable misconduct which I have now to repent, is the seduction of that young woman who passed at Brighton for my niece. You heard her claimed by the man who came into the church as his wife;—she is so indeed. He is clerk in a mercantile house in the city, with which I have occasional intercourse in the way of business; and that led to my first seeing her. She had not then been long married, and was blooming with youth and beauty; much more so than when you saw her; though even then her beauty was not unworthy of admiration, as I think you yourself must confess;—your friend seemed to feel it sensibly. It is needless to relate the progress of my guilt; suffice it to say that after some resistance, I at length prevailed with her to quit her husband clandestinely. This is now seven years ago. She has lived with me ever since; passing sometimes for my mistress, sometimes for my wife, sometimes for my niece, according as it suited my caprice, or the convenience of the moment.

"But at length grown tired of her, I wished

by some means to get her fairly off my hands; and seeing how strong an impression even her remains of beauty had made upon young Mr. Armstrong, I thought that I could, in promoting this attachment, and uniting them in marriage, at once rid myself of her and avenge myself on his father. I therefore gave her instructions how to conduct herself so as to ensnare him the more effectually; and, when she objected her having a husband living, told her that he had been long dead, but that I had concealed his death from her, lest she might have any latent sparks of affection for him remaining, and might be rendered unhappy by the intelligence. She was still reluctant to the part I wanted her to act: but I knew how much she was in my power, and at length, by mingled threats and promises, prevailed with her to follow my directions implicitly, till we had, as I hoped, brought matters to a successful issue. It was a principal object of my anxiety to keep the whole matter a secret till the irretrievable blow was struck; and I feasted like a vulture over its prey on the idea of the father's anguish when the grand explosion should take place. But it is probably needless to repeat the manner in which I practised on your friend's easy good nature, and complying

spirit, to soothe him to secresy; those particulars are doubtless known to you already.

"It is impossible to describe the irritation of my mind on finding an obstacle to my revenge spring up so unexpectedly, even at the moment when I considered its consummation as completed. My phrensy was incapable of control, when I perceived that instead of entailing upon the son of the man whom I so much hated, and through the son upon the father, the disgrace attendant upon such a connection, my whole train of villany was on the point of being exposed. It was well for me, it was well for you, young man, that I had not a knife or dagger ready at hand, since it would certainly have been plunged into your heart, probably too into my own: nay, I could gladly have possessed at that moment some dreadful engine of destruction, which would at one stroke have swept off every body present. But I cannot bear to dwell on the recollection, nor is it necessary to say more. You know the whole extent of my guilt;—my heart is relieved by the confession:—all I have more to ask is, that I may be permitted to die in peace; that I may not be harassed by further questions, or be constrained to listen to the repetition of a name which I can never hear without the most

poignant anguish. I ask not Mr. Armstrong's forgiveness; what I would have done is too atrocious to be forgiven: I scarcely know whether it be within the compass of infinite mercy to pardon it. My guilt would have been far less if I had at once stabbed the young man to the heart.

"I know not how I am able to bear my Anastasia's presence; her kindness, her attentions, ought to convey to my soul reproaches too keen to be endured; yet they are shown with an appearance of so much real interest and regard, so much as if nothing had ever intervened to interrupt our conjugal happiness, that I am almost ready to be deceived into the idea of my conduct towards her having been irreproachable. If my life should be spared, it shall be devoted to sincere penitence for my guilt towards her, towards Mr. Armstrong, towards many others against whom I have sinned very deeply, but yet I hope that the name of Armstrong will never reach my ears. I most sincerely repent what I have done; but that name I can never hear with calmness. Nay, sir, while I acknowledge my obligations to you for having been the means of bringing me to this state of repentance, I cannot deny that the sight of you harrows up my soul. I wished my confession made to you alone, as the friend of the injured

parties; but this grand effort accomplished, I hope nothing will ever intervene to render a second interview of the kind necessary. Farewell, young man, may Heaven preserve you from ever falling into a like abyss of guilt and misery!"

It was an inexpressible relief to me to be thus dismissed, as I really had no power of speech; and rising from my seat, I quitted the room in silence. My heart was oppressed with a tumult of conflicting thoughts and reflections; shocked beyond measure at the confession to which I had been listening, yet deeply affected at witnessing the state of mind and body to which these misdeeds had reduced the offender. The narrative had been given with frequent pauses and interruptions, as if the speaker was overcome for the moment with his sufferings, and the whole scene produced an effect upon my mind scarcely less agonizing. I stopped for some time leaning upon the balustrade of the staircase, before I had power to descend and return to Mrs. Northington in the room below.

"Well, sir," she said, when she saw me enter, "you have heard all that my unhappy husband had to impart. He has been inexpressibly anxious to make this confession to you, pray Heaven that his mind may be relieved by it, and become more composed!—while that remains in its present troubled state, I am afraid

small hopes can be entertained of any alleviation of his sufferings."

"Indeed, madam," I replied, "the story I have heard has shocked me more than I am able to describe; it admits of no remarks which can be pleasant for you to hear, or proper for me to makè, and I make none. Thus much, however, let me be permitted to say. As there are many particulars which you would doubtless wish not to be generally known in the world, I most solemnly assure you that the story shall never be imparted by me to any one without your consent. At the same time there is a person, madam, so deeply interested,—yet even to him without your approbation—"

She started, tears seemed involuntarily to rush into her eyes,—"Yes, sir," she said, "use your own discretion; your whole conduct convinces me that I may place the firmest reliance upon it,—perhaps"—but here she paused, appearing unable to proceed.

I sat for a few minutes, but then thought that my presence was for the moment painful to her, and I rose up to take my leave. "Mr. Northington, madam," I said, "desires not to see me any more; the sight of me brings recollections to his mind which he is unable to support: yet you must be assured that I cannot avoid feeling the utmost anxiety both as to his

situation and yours. Is it then an unwarrantable intrusion to ask permission sometimes to inquire after you?"

"By no means, sir. The interest you kindly express for us does you honour, and I shall always be most happy to see you, and answer your inquiries myself. At a former interview, Mr. Danville," she continued, "I hinted that I wished through you to communicate some particulars to your friends, of which I thought it right that they should be informed. They concerned my unfortunate husband's connection with Mrs. Corbett, and are probably now more clearly explained to you by him than they could have been by me. It was by chance that her husband was known to me, and it was not till after his wife had left him: he it was who informed me of my husband's accident, and where he was to be found."

CHAPTER XIII.

Ingenious digression concerning unanimity and diversity of opinion.—Modes of entertainment on shipboard.—A specimen of gallantry, not of the age of chivalry, with another that would not have disgraced that period.

WHILE Mr. Northington remains in a fluctuating state, not entirely hopeless, yet giving no reason to entertain sanguine expectations of his recovery;—and while Mrs. Northington, by her kind attentions and assiduities, continues to pass the severest censure possible upon his behaviour to her, it is fit that my pen should for a while advert to some of the other personages who have played conspicuous parts in this grand drama.

I wish I knew whether my readers in general were more interested in the Gretna-Green fugitives, or in the fashionable party at Rome, that I might know which ought to take precedence in being re-introduced upon the tapis. For, since unanimity is not a thing to be hoped for amid the multiplicity of readers into whose hands this book may be reasonably expected to fall, I confess myself at this moment greatly embarrassed. We all know that

diversity of opinion is so much a thing to be expected among human beings, that we must often have seen instances where as many different opinions were given upon a subject, as there were persons to *opine* upon it. Of this great truth our legislators of old were so well aware, that having in their profound wisdom resolved to refer the determination of all important questions of justice, whether civil or criminal, to twelve persons who were to be unanimous in their decision, the next point was, how to arrange matters so that this unanimity might be obtained. In the method determined upon, I must say that I think great judgement and knowledge of human nature were shown. It was obvious that there was one point on which not only twelve, but twelve thousand persons might be unanimous, and that was, that all would be desirous of eating and drinking. This then was made the basis whereby to obtain unanimity on other points, and till they became unanimous upon the minor object, that is the question of justice which they were summoned to decide, they were not to be allowed to indulge in the major object, that upon which there never is any disagreement, but in which all unanimously take delight.

It may perhaps here be objected, that a man's life may then often depend upon the

greater or less time that the desire of replenishing exhausted nature can be controlled, and that he who is extremely eager to get to the roast beef, must yield to him whose appetites are more under his command. I cannot help this; I can only say, that in selecting the persons who are to compose a jury, I think it a very wise regulation that the right worshipful members of certain corporate bodies are never included in the pannel. Their natures are so soon exhausted, and are so often soliciting replenishment, that any sturdy fellow, of a different description, might soon make them, right or wrong, bend their unanimity to his, only by the capacity he has acquired of resisting for a so much greater length of time the magnetic powers of a well-covered table.

But since the unanimity to be obtained only with so much contrivance among twelve people, can never, by any possible means, be expected, at least, upon such a point as that in question, among twelve hundred thousand; what is to be done?—And I think the number above mentioned is the very lowest at which I can estimate my readers; indeed, in estimating them so low, great credit ought surely to be given me for my extreme humility. The population of Great Britain, it will be recollected, is computed at twelve millions of souls, I

therefore do not calculate upon above a tithe of it as my readers; and for an author to suppose that his book may not be read by above one in ten of his dear fellow countrymen, must be allowed an instance of modesty not often to be found among the fraternity to which he belongs.

Well, then, as I was about to say, since it is impossible among this number to expect unanimity of opinion, I would gladly decide the question by a majority of voices, if I knew of any means by which the suffrages could be collected. But since much consideration would be requisite to decide upon any means for accomplishing this great end, and I am in prodigious haste to get on with my work, I believe I must determine the matter for myself, when unanimity will be obtained without any difficulty. Weighing well then the arguments which might be adduced by either party in favour of their claims to priority of re-appearance, I rest my determination upon one point only. As the party under the delightful sky of Italy are much better amused than those who are on their way to the northern division of the island of Great Britain, I think it more consistent with humanity, to leave those who are best entertained the longest time in their actual situation. Setting aside, therefore, pre-

cedence of rank, I first turn to the relief of my humble wanderers.

Since the views along the road they pursued, though extremely extensive, were not much varied, the objects presented to the traveller's eye being chiefly confined to two, the sky and the water, so there was not much field opened for remark upon them. They afforded no room for dwelling with rapture upon picturesque beauties, upon the fine inequalities of hill and dale, upon the sweeping groves of oak, of ash, of beech, or of pine, with all the various et cæteras which furnish so much matter for conversation among terrestrial tourists, and add so much delightful embellishment to many a fair page of many a terrific, a tender, a sentimental, a pathetic romance or novel. This being the case, it was necessary that the party on board the good brig the Thomas and Sally, of Newcastle, Edward Carberry, proprietor; Abraham Higgins, master; Jasper Truelove, mate; should find other topics of conversation. When they had observed to each other that the sky was clear or cloudy, that the sun shone bright or did not shine at all, that the water was rough or smooth, the wind calm or tempestuous; here was all the variety that the passing scenes could afford for observation, and

they must have become very dull if other topics had not been resorted to.

Had the party consisted of only a duo, the sprightly mate and his future mate, in so delightful a tête-à-tête, ample matter would have been furnished for each other's entertainment, in all the tender vows they would have exchanged in the thousand and ten thousand pretty things that their relative situations would have suggested. But these are a species of *passe-tems* only agreeable at a tête-à-tête, the presence of a third person casts a damp over the genius,—the inspirations of Cupid are withdrawn at the approach of an interloper, and topics of a more general nature must be found that the machine may not stop altogether.

Or had the ladies fortunately been accommodated with an amusing fit of sea-sickness, the necessity of conversation would have been superseded, since, where that is felt in perfection, it is sufficient of itself to engross the whole attention; the want of, or wish for, occupation or conversation of any kind is totally annihilated. But the ladies were not sea-sick, neither was Mr. Jasper Truelove so, and it was necessary therefore that the wits of the latter should be taxed to entertain the ladies, and while away the time till the happy goal

was reached, towards which they were now bending their course.

Already had the dexterous manner in which they had eluded the vigilance of the old folks, and got snugly on board ship, been frequently discussed, till the topic began to be somewhat hackneyed, when very naturally our young spark made a transition from their past exploits to their future prospects. This was a subject which had probably not hitherto occupied much of the reflecting powers of either of the young ladies, particularly of Miss Clarissa, whom it most nearly concerned; her present happiness was felt much too exquisitely to be interrupted by intrusive considerations with regard to the future. Perhaps it may be objected against Mr. Jasper Truelove as a want of gallantry, that he did not find his actual happiness all sufficient to him, that he should be casting anticipating glances towards the future. For his credit, however, it must be observed that these glances were not attended with any doubts or ill omens as to the consequences of the little *équipé* in which they were engaged, he dwelt only on the happiness to which he conceived he might fairly look forward,—his anticipations were only of years of uninterrupted bliss.

In the course of them, however, it appeared (and here I must confess that our spark's gal-

lantry may be impeached) that the happiness to which he looked forward was not limited entirely to possessing the lady; that he had at least equal satisfaction in the idea of possessing her fortune, which he plainly considered as entirely in her own power. On this point Miss Clarissa very imprudently undeceived him, little suspecting the consequences with which so much candour and ingenuousness on her part was to be attended.

"What then, Miss," says the lover, "if the old gentleman should be angry about your running away, he mayn't be for coming down with the shiners, and you mayn't at last have any fortune at all?"

"Oh, dear, there can be no danger of that; —who should papa give his money to but his own daughters? and as we have both gone off, there's as much reason to be angry with one as the other; so 'tis not likely that he'll make any difference between us."

"Aye, but may be though, he'll take care that none of the yellow boys shall come to me, and then you know, Miss, what am I to do?"

"Lord, if they come to me won't it be just the same thing? you can always do whatever you please with 'em."

"Not if the rogues are tied up, for then the gentlemen that's to look after 'em will be

coming in with their two eggs a penny and three of 'em rotten, and I shall be no more able to do what I please with 'em than if you hadn't had no fortune at all."

"Gracious, Mr. Truelove, I never knew such fancies to take into your head! If the money is tied up, 'twill be only that it may be kept together for our children; but we shall have the interest, or at least I shall, and I can do what I please with it, fit up our house smart, or any thing of that kind, and what signifies whether 'tis you do it or I? Indeed 'tis quite nonsense; one would think, to hear you talk, that we wasn't to live together, that we was to be two just as we are now, and you know matrimony's to make us only one."

"I don't know any such thing, and I know that I'll never marry where I can't be master, that's what I won't. I'm sure if I had thought that you had no money of your own, I'd never have run away with you, that's what I wouldn't. But every body in the coal-yard kept saying what a deal of money you'd have, so then I thought it would be quite a good thing. As to old people, they're such fools that there's no knowing what they'll do, and I can see no good in marrying if I can't spend my wife's money just the same as if it was my own. So, if you please, Miss, you may look out for an-

other husband, for I'm not after any such jokes, I can promise you."

"And pray what are we to do then?"

"Whatever you please, Miss. Go back in the ship if you like;—you'll have had a merry-making at least, if you hav'n't got a husband."

A good deal more of this agreeable kind of altercation succeeded between these fond lovers, in which Miss Emma failed not to take a due share, till at length the two young ladies so out-talked and out-scolded the one young gentleman, that he was forced to fly and seek a shelter from the storm in the hold of the vessel.

This explanation did not, however, take place till just as the Thomas and Sally arrived at its anchorage in the river Tyne; but in consequence of it, all prospect of setting forwards immediately, as the young ladies once expected, seemed entirely at an end. They were indeed placed in rather an awkward predicament; for Mr. Truelove no sooner found the vessel at anchor, than he escaped slily on shore, whence he presently dispatched the following elegant billet of apology, for having quitted their agreeable society so abruptly.

"Dear Miss Clarissa, and Miss Emma,

"This is with my best respects, and I am very sorry that you should have taken the trou-

ble of coming this voyage, which there would have been no occasion for, if you had explained matters more fully before we set out. I can't think how you could suppose when I knew so little of you, and couldn't even tell whether you was good-tempered or not, or what sort of wives you was likely to make, that I should ever have thought of asking you to run away with me, if I hadn't supposed that the shiners was to be chinked without asking leave of fathers and mothers; but now I know which way the wind is, I can't think of steering full in the teeth of it. I'm very sorry 'tis not in my power to show you all about Newcastle, or to take care of you home; but such pretty ladies is very likely to pick up sweethearts wherever they go, therefore I am not afraid of what may befal you.

"So no more at present from

"Your ever-loving friend and well-wisher,

"Jasper Truelove."

It is not necessary to expatiate much upon the very awkward situation in which these two poor girls now found themselves; their only resource was to lay the whole case before Mr. Abraham Higgins, the master of the vessel, and solicit his advice and assistance how best to get out of their embarrassment. He said he really scarcely knew what to advise;—

"You see, young ladies," said he, "that I was not much mistaken when I observed that I thought you had played a very silly trick, and certainly if I had known it in time I should have sent you back to your papa and mamma; but you were hid up till we were quite out at sea, and then there was no help for it. I said then, you know, that very likely you'd repent it before the end of the voyage, but you couldn't possibly believe me. As to that young rascal, he'd better not come near me any more, for if he does he shall feel my stick heartily upon his shoulders as sure as ever my name's Abraham Higgins."

"Oh, you are very kind indeed," said the young ladies, crying and sobbing as if their hearts would break, "pray do thrash him well. But what is to become of us? we can never see papa and mamma any more, we shall be so ashamed of ourselves, and where can we go, and how can we get home?—though we certainly never can go home again."

"I can't say but I think you have a little reason to be ashamed of yourselves," said honest Mr. Higgins: "however, what's done can't be undone; and out of regard to your good father I'll tell you what I'll do. You shall go home with me to my house for a night or two, and then I'll take places for you in the mail-

coach, and lend you money to get up to London; and I'll speak to the coachman to have an eye after you, as you ar'n't much used to travelling, and so I dare say you'll get safe enough to town."

With abundance of thanks the young ladies accepted this kind offer of Mr. Higgins; so conducting them on shore he carried them to his house, and consigned them to the care of his wife, who was a very neat housewifely good sort of woman. The next post, a letter was dispatched to Mr. Fenton, telling him the whole story, and preparing him to receive his daughters safe and unwedded in a very short time.

After staying two days at Newcastle, when Mr. Higgins thought them sufficiently recovered from the fatigue of the voyage, having secured them places, he accompanied them to the inn for the purpose of recommending them to the care of the coachman. Here he espied in the yard a gentleman who appeared to be a passenger in the mail, whom he immediately accosted with "How do you do, Mr. Anderson?—sure you can't be going in the mail!"

"Ha, Abraham, is it you?—Why should I not be going in the mail?"

"Because 'tis such extraordinary good luck I could scarcely think it."

"Why such extraordinary good luck?"

"And you're going quite to London?"

"Assuredly."

"Why, you must know I've two young lasses here that I want to send to London, and I know you're so kind that you'll have an eye to'em, and perhaps when they get there see'em safe into their papa's own hands."

"Two young lasses!—I can never be employed more to my satisfaction than in taking care of two such nice young lasses as these. Be assured that I will never lose sight of them till they are safe under their father's roof."

"Please to get into the coach, young ladies, then," said Mr. Higgins, "while I speak a word to this gentleman:" so saying, he handed Miss Clarissa and Miss Emma into their vehicle; and drawing Mr. Anderson aside, related their story to him, again recommending them to his protection, and giving him directions where they were to be lodged. Mr. Anderson said he was happy they had escaped so well from their awkward situation, and promised to see them safe into Thames-street; when ascending the vehicle away they drove together, the fourth place in the carriage being unoccupied.

The first stage of the journey was performed on the part of the ladies amid abundant crying and sobbing, and on the part of the gentleman

amid efforts to console them. He said they had indeed been a little imprudent; but no doubt their father and mother would make allowances for it, and be ready to forgive them, as they had taken the first opportunity of returning, and that it was a pity they should spoil those pretty eyes with crying. Perhaps the assurance that he did think their eyes pretty, was not the least consoling part of the suggestions he offered to disperse their melancholy. Certain it is that his arguments altogether succeeded so well, that the clouds were at length dispersed, all was sunshine and cheerfulness, and the young ladies began to grow chatty and agreeable.

Newcastle is two hundred and seventy-one miles from London; and even at the rate mail coaches travel, many hours must be employed to perform the journey; consequently there was much time for various topics to be discussed between Mr. Anderson and his two fair *protégées*. The beautiful views in many parts afforded an abundant source of conversation with the young ladies; they thought some of them quite as fine as the view from Highgate Hill or Greenwich Park; till at length they agreed that if Sam Danville were to see them he would be drawing them, and hanging them up in his room. There were

reasons, which will hereafter be known to the reader, why the name of Danville, it not being a very common one, caught Mr. Anderson's attention rather forcibly, especially with the name of Sam prefixed to it; and desirous to hear a little more about the person whom they had called by that name, he asked, "Is that the name of your drawing-master, young ladies?"

"Oh, dear, no," they replied, "he's only one of the clerks in our yard; but he's exceedingly fond of drawing, and his room's quite full of things of one kind or other that he has done."

"Excuse me, ladies, I did not perfectly understand Mr. Higgins, what your father's profession was; he spoke to me in a hurry; but you mentioned the yard, is it impertinent to ask what that may imply?"

"Oh, I'm sure, sir, you're very welcome to know. Papa has been for a great many years head man to Mr. Carberry, the great coal-merchant in Thames-street. Indeed every thing is entirely under papa's management, for Mr. Carberry scarcely ever comes there himself; and the business is immense, you've no notion what a number of young men papa has under him."

"Who, I dare say, all think themselves

particularly happy in being employed where there are two such pretty young ladies to admire. I think I have heard Mr. Carberry mentioned; if I am not mistaken, he married a Miss Armstrong, a young lady of Wiltshire?"

"Oh, no," said Miss Emma; "I think I've heard papa say that Mr. Carberry married a widow lady, so it couldn't be Miss Armstrong."

"Lord, sister, how you talk!" said Miss Clarissa, "so she was a widow when Mr. Carberry married her; but she must, you know, have been Miss something or other before she was married at all; and for that matter I do believe she was Miss Armstrong, for I know that young Mr. Walter Armstrong, Sam Danville's friend, is her nephew. However, she's dead now, poor woman!"

An odd coincidence, thought Mr. Anderson within himself, that two females, even slightly connected with any of the Armstrong family, should have been thus by chance placed under my protection! And the reader too will probably think the coincidence rather whimsical, when he hears that this was the very same Mr. Anderson, through whose interest Mr. Armstrong got the curacy of Langham. He had been for some time on a visit at Edinburgh, whence he was coming to stay with a niece in London, who was in rather an extraordinary

and embarrassing situation. If the reader be curious to know who this niece was, and what were the circumstances which occasioned Mr. Anderson to take this journey, he will be satisfied upon both points in the very next chapter.

This was the most remarkable part of the conversation that passed between the travellers; indeed it was the only incident in the journey worth relating; for the mail arrived safely in London at the proper time, without having met with any accident or adventure whatever. That time was of course early in the morning, and it so fell out that the trio entered the coal-yard just as I was sallying out on my morning's ramble; one of the first objects, therefore, presented to the eyes of the returned fugitives was my individual self.

"Ha! how do you do, ladies?" said I.—"You are just come off your journey, I conclude?"

"Yes," they replied with a deep blush, and looking somewhat confused;—then after a moment's pause added,—"Do you know, Mr. Danville, whether papa and mamma are stirring yet?"

The eyes of their protector, which had hitherto been occupied in wandering over the picturesque beauties of the wharf, were now

in a moment turned full upon me, with a look in which I should certainly have read, if I had known then as much as I knew afterwards, "Ha! is that Sam Danville?"—As it was, I read nothing particular in it; only our respective organs of sight happening to come directly in contact, I was perfectly sensible that his were directed towards me in what would be called, *vulgò*, a full stare.

"Indeed, ladies," I replied to my fair questionists, "I do not know whether Mr. and Mrs. Fenton may be stirring; but if you please I will inquire, and let them know of your arrival."

"Thank you, Mr. Danville, that would be very kind, for we should like better that papa and mamma should be prepared to receive us."

Away then I went; when, as soon as I was out of hearing, Mr. Anderson said, "That then is the young man you were speaking of!"

"Yes, that is Sam Danville. He is a prodigious favourite with Mr. Carberry; so he begged papa and mamma to let him board with us, else none of the clerks did that before; so that's the way we come to be so sociable with him."

I soon returned, announcing that papa and mamma were rejoiced to hear of their arrival, and very ready to see and forgive them. They

proceeded then to the house with their protector, where they were welcomed home with the utmost kindness, and the good father was profuse in his expressions of gratitude to Mr. Anderson for the attention he had paid them during the journey. I did not wait to witness this scene, I only know it by report, for I proceeded on my walk. Mr. and Mrs. Fenton insisted on making breakfast for Mr. Anderson, and the ceremonies of the breakfast table over, the latter proceeded to the place of his destination.

CHAPTER XIV.

Conjectures, instead of assertions, offered to the reader.—Fresh disclosures in different ways.—New subjects for confession and repentance.—A will made, including a very unusual bequest.

THIS place was no other than the house in Bedford Row, where the reader has been already introduced more than once;—where he has seen Mr. Northington on his sick-bed in a state of deep contrition for his past misconduct, and his truly noble-minded wife overlooking all past injuries to devote herself to him in this state of affliction and suffering. For, courteous reader, the time is arrived when it is proper to state that Mrs. Northington was indeed the niece of Mr. Anderson. If any inquiry should be instituted why this circumstance was not sooner made known, I answer, that since Mr. Armstrong did not think proper to mention it either to his sister Eleanor or me, it did not appear becoming in me to communicate what he, no doubt, for good reasons, had purposely concealed.

Should any one wish to know the motives that led to this concealment, I freely own that I can only offer conjectures upon the subject. It has appeared already that Mr. Anderson was

in the early period of Mr. Armstrong's life one of his warmest friends; and it will appear hereafter, that in consequence of what had passed between him and his niece, or rather of what had not passed, and what he thought ought to have passed, he was exceedingly displeased, and ceased all intercourse with him. Now this being the case, it seems by no means improbable that Mr. Armstrong felt too deeply affected at the rupture to mention the name of his friend, especially as it could not be mentioned without a sort of implied censure upon his conduct, and this in such a heart as Mr. Armstrong's gratitude would forbid. If these conjectures do not appear satisfactory, I am sorry, since I really have no others to offer; and it seems so consistent with the whole character of Mr. Armstrong, to have acted with this kind of delicacy towards his former friend, that I am persuaded myself they are well-grounded.

It was the peculiar situation of his niece, whom he always loved as a daughter, which occasioned Mr. Anderson's present journey to London. He was upon a visit to a friend at Edinburgh, at the time when Mr. Northington met with his accident, and Mrs. Northington wrote immediately to inform him of what had happened, and of her determination to go and

attend upon her husband; provided her attentions should not be rejected by him. Mr. Anderson then, conceiving that in such a situation she would want some one to console and assist her, resolved on going to her without delay.

Mr. Northington had no sooner discharged his mind of a great burden in the confession he made to me, than another object occupied his mind no less anxiously; this was to make his will, a thing he had hitherto entirely neglected. At his separation from his wife a regular deed was drawn up, by which he irrevocably secured to her the annuity he had engaged to pay; a settlement had besides been made at their marriage, by which she would have been entitled to a very handsome income. With regard to the remainder of his property he always professed a perfect indifference; his relations, he said, might scramble for it at their pleasure. But now impressed with a deep sense of his past errors, and a no less lively feeling of his wife's kindness, he became anxious to make a more liberal provision for her. Besides, in his present state of penitence, other recollections crowded upon his mind, and he felt that his guilt would be extremely aggravated by leaving the distribution of his

property to the casual provisions by law established; that there were claims upon him not acknowledged by the law, in reality far more forcible than those which it recognised.

"My Anastasia," said he, when he first talked of making his will, "among other subjects of self-reproach which I feel at this moment, I cannot forget poor Jenny Elliott. I never doubted that her quitting my neighbourhood was owing to you, and I have heard that she died not very long after the birth of her poor infant, the offspring of my seduction. I have heard also, that upon our separation you adopted the child as your own, and have educated her as such."

"It is true that she has lived with me ever since, and I have given her the education of a gentlewoman. She is now seventeen, and a very amiable girl, who, by her dutiful affection, amply repays all that I have done for her. Till very lately she was ignorant of her own story, but I thought her now arrived at an age when it was better imparted to her. She was deeply affected when she heard it; but our mutual affection has not been diminished by the disclosure, and I am sure that her heart would be soothed by being permitted to see her father, and add her filial cares to my conjugal ones."

" Yes, I will see her and beg a blessing upon her, if a hope can be entertained that my prayers can ever be accepted at the throne of grace. Do not then let this interview be delayed."

" She shall be sent for immediately."

" She has been called by her father's name, Anastasia?—She is known to the world as Miss Northington?"

" O no!—I have always called her by her mother's name, Elliott."

" She has never then been supposed your daughter?"

" Never.—She has passed under her real character, as an unfortunate infant whom I had taken under my protection, and should consider as my daughter; nor do I believe that there ever existed between any mother and daughter a purer and stronger affection."

" Excellent woman!—how can I sufficiently express my gratitude and admiration! You have spared me the agony which I must have felt at this moment, had there been any reason to suppose this infant thrown destitute upon the world. Poor Jenny! till I knew her, she was happy, and, though living in a cottage, was the pride and joy of her parents. I ruined the peace of the whole family, and brought Jenny herself to an untimely grave. They

say, Anastasia, that she died the victim of remorse?"

"I am afraid so."

"And her parents?"

"They are still living.—You know that they quitted Altringham, unable to bear the altered face of every thing, after so severe a misfortune. My uncle Anderson was then in want of two persons to live in his house at Glenmore, and I recommended them to him. They have lived there ever since, taking care of his house and garden and his little farm."

"Anastasia, you have been a guardian angel to them all;—how can I ever acknowledge sufficiently all that I owe you!"

Such then was the history of the young lady whom I saw with Mrs. Northington at the Shakespeare Gallery; such was the history of the Louisa Elliott whom Walter had met at a private dance some months before, and declared himself to be half in love with. She was sent for without delay, to be presented to her father, and arrived at the door exactly at the same moment with Mr. Anderson. To him she was well known, and he rejoiced to hear the errand npon which she had been summoned. The meeting was a very affecting one; but I leave it to the reader's imagination to fill up the minute shadings of it. The knowledge

that he had this child to provide for, rendered Mr. Northington still more anxious to make his will without delay.

An attorney was therefore to be summoned for the purpose; and Mrs. Northington, for what reasons I do not pretend to explain, mentioned Mr. Shelburne as a person whom she thought it adviseable to consult upon the occasion. Perhaps she had no other motive in this advice, than the known character of Mr. Shelburne for probity and integrity, qualities not held to form universally a part of the elements of which gentlemen of his profession are composed. And yet, perhaps, the ascribing a want of them more especially to this class of mankind is an unreasonable prejudice. That among the members who adopt such a mode of getting their bread, there may be many who do not find the bread come with a rapidity answerable to their desires by confining themselves to the fair smooth path of honesty, and who therefore step aside into the crooked path of deceit and wiles to obtain it, is undoubtedly most true. But are not the instances also numerous, of many persons never deviating from the strictest principles of honour in the pursuit of this profession?—Most true, also.—What shall we say then?—Is not this the case in all professions?—Is there not among the indivi-

duals in every way of life, a great mixture of good and bad?—Most true, again. Is it then wholly justifiable to apply the general censure so commonly affixed to this class? or is it really true that the proportion of the bad to the good, is greater in this than in any other? —Far be it from me to assert that such is the case.

Be this as it may, Mr. Shelburne had maintained through life an unvaried character for the strictest integrity, no one had ever dared to call it in question. This certainly was a sufficient reason for Mrs. Northington's recommending him particularly to her husband for settling the present business. But it is also certain, that she knew very well how nearly he was connected with the Armstrong family. That this circumstance however had any influence in the recommendation, I do not pretend to assert. I think it wrong in a historian to sift so very minutely into the motives by which the several performers in his drama are actuated. With regard to my *dramatis personæ*, I do not hold myself responsible for their motives upon any occasion, or bound to assign to my readers a motive for every action performed; it is sufficient that I state the occurrences, giving the motives that led to them, if by chance they have come to my know-

ledge, and leaving the aforesaid readers to make their own commentaries upon them;—a license of which I have no doubt they will amply avail themselves. How in fact should I pretend to account for them all, when perhaps many things were done without motives? Though philosophers and metaphysicians may possibly assert that this cannot be. At least, however, I trust they will allow that people are not always themselves perfectly acquainted with their own motives; and this might probably be in part the case with Mrs. Northington. At any rate, the motive above hinted at, as a possible one, was not avowed, and I have therefore no concern with it.

As to the fact of Mr. Shelburne's being applied to on this occasion, there is no doubt; and it is equally certain that when first he presented himself at the bedside of his client, he had no idea how the latter's amiable wife had been circumstanced with regard to his own wife's brother. We have seen, that on two occasions only the story had ever been mentioned by Mr. Armstrong, and then it had been drawn from him by very particular circumstances. It was not want of confidence in Mrs. Shelburne that had occasioned his reserve towards her, it was a general delicacy with regard to mentioning the affair; an anxiety to

conceal from his sisters how much they had at one period of their lives been obstacles to his happiness. No inducement then having ever intervened to make any communication of it to Mrs. Shelburne, similar to that which had happened in the case of Mrs. Carberry, from her it had still remained concealed.

Mr. Shelburne then approached Mr. Northington's bed-side, to receive his instructions about drawing up his will, wholly ignorant of his having deprived his brother-in-law of a wife, though fully sensible of his having endeavoured to confer the blessing of one upon his nephew. Perhaps, among the motives which led to Mr. Shelburne's being sent for on this occasion, was his knowledge of the affair last alluded to. Mrs. Northington might justly think that there was a probability of the circumstances transpiring in the course of the transaction, and judge it better, therefore, that a person should be employed to whom they were already known, than to run the hazard, by sending for a stranger, of her husband's atrocious conduct being spread further than was absolutely necessary; a delicacy of feeling, if such really was the case, that did her great honour.

"Anastasia," said Mr. Northington, "will you be so good as to leave this gentleman and

me together? I wish that what I have to say to him should pass without witnesses."

Mr. Northington then began by dictating, as an exordium to the will, a warm eulogium upon the virtues of his wife, accompanied by a severe censure upon his own conduct towards her, with a solemn appeal to heaven for the truth of his deep repentance, and sincere resolution, if he should recover from his present dangerous state, to endeavour to atone for the past, by all possible efforts to render her in future as happy as she deserved.

"You would have this consigned, sir, as a lasting record?—It cannot form a part of your will without being so."

"That is my intention. The wrongs she has sustained from me have been public, so shall be my acknowledgement of them. Furthermore, I make it my earnest request, that in case I be removed from this world in consequence of my present illness, she will never suffer any ill-imagined ideas of delicacy with regard to my memory, to prevent her rendering herself as happy as our mortal state will allow; that her hand may be given, as soon as the established rules of decency will permit, where her heart has always been devoted. This request I owe alike as a reparation to her, and to the wronged object of her affec-

tions;—alas! how deeply wronged!—to him whom I sought to stab to the heart through the injury done to his only child."

Mr. Shelburne started, and fixed his eyes involuntarily upon his client, with an expression of the deepest astonishment.

"You are surprised, sir," Mr. Northington proceeded, "you think this a bequest not usually made. You have perhaps been more frequently instructed to insert a clause which shall interdict rather than promote the marriage of the beloved object we are about to quit. But I only perform an act of justice; an act imperiously commanded by that conscience which now speaks so loudly within me, and tells me that my Anastasia ought long ago to have been his, ought never to have been another's. Write then, as I request, it would be a satisfaction to me in my last moments, if I could be assured that this injured woman would, in future, be as happy with the man of her choice, as she has been otherwise with me."

Mr. Shelburne did write, and wrote in silence, though his astonishment was such that he could with difficulty guide his pen.

The rest of the will comprehended such dispositions as he chose to make of his property, and among all his faults, it had not been one

that this was in any way dissipated or diminished by him. He had therefore ample possessions to dispose of; and after some trifling legacies, he bequeathed ten thousand pounds to his daughter, and the remainder of his unentailed property of every kind to his wife, only recommending to her some few persons who he thought had claims upon him, Mrs. Corbett being the first upon the list.

CHAPTER XV.

Tête-à-tête discussions.—There are more things in heaven and earth than ever man could dream of.—The most disinterested acts of kindness are often perverted into subjects of censure.

"MARGARET," said Mr. Shelburne, as he and his wife sat tête-à-tête in the study, the evening of the day on which the above instructions had been given by Mr. Northington,—"Margaret," said he, "I have just learnt a piece of family history relating to your brother Bernard, which I am surprised that I never heard from you. I find he once had some love affair with this very Mrs. Northington, whose husband's will I am now employed to draw up."

"My brother Bernard had a love affair with Mrs. Northington!—you astonish me!"

"Not as Mrs. Northington;—'tis no matter of *scandalum magnatum*; but that many years back he was engaged to her, or something like it. Mr. Northington has been making a sort of confession to me, by which it should appear that he considers himself as having thrust poor Bernard aside, after the latter supposed himself secure of the prize. Such, at least, seems the fair inference from what passed."

"This is very extraordinary! But believe me, Randolph, I never till this moment had the remotest idea of such a thing. You must surely have made some mistake?"

"No mistake, certainly. Mr. Northington, after a string of confessions which he directed me to place as an exordium to his will, desires that his wife will give her hand to your brother as soon as she decently can after his death, and says this is the only atonement he can make to either for having stood in the way of their union long ago; that she never ought to have been the wife of any other man than Bernard Armstrong."

"Well, I think I never was more astonished! —And when could all this happen?—You know that I lived nearly ten years with my brother, and in that time I never heard the least hint of any thing of the kind."

"I can only repeat that my information came this morning from my client himself."

"Surely, then, he must have been delirious. I cannot conceive it possible to be true."

"He could hardly be delirious, I think. Indeed I should be very sorry to suspect him of being so, since his will must then be nugatory; and as it is made entirely in favour of his wife, who deserves every thing he can possibly do

for her, I should be grieved indeed if the least doubt were to arise as to its validity."

"He may not, perhaps, be delirious on general topics, and yet rave upon this one. The snare into which he had drawn poor Walter must naturally sit heavy on his mind, and this may induce all sorts of strange and wild ideas connected with the name of Armstrong."

"Undoubtedly it may be so; yet delirium seldom dwells upon ideas for which there was not some foundation laid in the hours of sanity. Besides, there was really not the least appearance of his being delirious."

"Did Mr. Northington say positively that my brother Bernard was once engaged to his wife?"

"He did not positively assert that they were engaged, but he said in very direct terms that she ought to have been his; that her heart was always devoted to him; which I thought implied an engagement between them."

"Why then was it not fulfilled?"

"I conclude that it was broken off through some machinations of his; for he seemed to consider himself as having acted a very culpable part in the affair."

"Still I know not how to think he could be in his right senses. Randolph, this really makes me very uneasy,—do gratify me in one thing.

If there be no truth in it, and I can scarcely persuade myself that there is, it will be very disagreeable to Mrs. Northington, it will not be very pleasant to my brother, to have such expressions form part of a public record: indeed, even supposing all to be true, it is surely a thing that both must deprecate. Can you not then mention what has passed in confidence to Mrs. Northington, and ask whether she would not be hurt at having the will stand thus prefaced? offering to endeavour, as if of yourself, to dissuade her husband from it."

"I think you are right, my love. However well intended by the penitent, in his zeal to make all possible atonement for his ill usage of her, and however grateful it may be to her to see him in such a temper of mind, it cannot be pleasant to think of being exposed to the jests which such expressions standing in a public deed must occasion. I will therefore go and talk the matter over with her."

The next morning then he went, and, desiring to speak with Mrs. Northington, fortunately found her alone. He began by making many apologies for what he was going to say, with hopes that it would not be interpreted as seeking to intrude impertinently into family concerns. He had really no other views than thinking it better that she should be made acquainted with

some circumstances which had occurred the day before in his conversation with Mr. Northington, lest otherwise consequences might ensue which would be unpleasant to her.

"Mr. Shelburne," she said, "I have no doubt of your intentions being very obliging, therefore pray speak freely."

Mr. Shelburne then related what had passed between him and Mr. Northington the day before, and fully explained his motives for mentioning it to her. He added, that he was the rather induced to make the communication, from the doubts expressed by his wife as to there being any foundation for what Mr. Northington had said, and her consequent fears that the whole proceeded from delirium.

"Indeed, sir," said Mrs. Northington, when he had done speaking, "I think myself particularly obliged by the step you have taken. It would certainly have been very painful to me to find such a request from my husband made in this public way; and you will greatly enhance the present obligation by endeavouring to dissuade him from it. Respecting what he has said with regard to myself and Mr. Armstrong, I think it incumbent on me to explain fully to what he alludes, lest inferences should be drawn to the disadvantage of your brother-in-law, which would be entirely undeserved on

his part. I the rather wish to make this statement, since, notwithstanding your connection with Mr. Armstrong, you, as well as Mrs. Shelburne, seem wholly uninformed upon the subject. There was undoubtedly a time when I flattered myself that he did not regard me with indifference; and while I could entertain that idea, it would have been impossible for me to form any other connection. But I can solemnly assure you that I never received from him any proposals of a serious nature; that nothing like an engagement ever subsisted between us; and though I might regret, I never had any reason to complain of, Mr. Armstrong's preferring another to me. Yet I must confess, that nothing but the certainty of another being preferred could have induced me to accept other proposals: indeed I only yielded at last to the unremitted importunities of Mr. Northington, and the eager solicitations of my friends. Alas! how much cause have I since had to regret that I did give up my own judgement and inclinations to theirs! But judge yourself, Mr. Shelburne, how distressing it would be to me, even if I were sure that I was the object of Mr. Armstrong's attachment, to have such a clause inserted! How much more distressing, when I consider even that as doubtful! I must even regard its insertion as tending to degrade me in

the eyes of the world, since it may give reason to suppose, that during the lifetime of my husband I had maintained an improper intercourse with another man."

While this scene passed between Mr. Shelburne and Mrs. Northington, I happened to call in Lincoln's Inn Fields, in order to deliver a message which Walter had sent to his uncle and aunt in a letter to me. I was introduced to Mrs. Shelburne alone. Her curiosity had been so much awakened, that she could not refrain from questioning me in a manner which I own startled me very much. "Samuel," she said, "you have, I think, seen Mrs. Northington several times?"

"I have, Madam."

"Did she ever mention being acquainted with my brother Bernard?"

"I know that they were acquainted before either of them was married: but they have never met since."

"It must then have been before Bernard went to live at Langham, for I am sure he could not have had any acquaintance with her afterwards: he was never absent from Langham above three or four days at a time, and she never was in that neighbourhood."

"I believe, indeed, he never saw her after he went to Langham."

"When was it, then, that they were so much acquainted? for you seem entirely in the secret."

"Secret, madam!"

"Yes, yes; come, Samuel, confess, there was once a flirtation between them?"

"Ah, Mrs. Shelburne! I have indeed been charged not to tell the story; yet since you seem casually to have acquired an imperfect knowledge of it, I cannot surely be guilty of a breach of confidence in relating it, such as it really is, lest through ignorance you may be led to say things which would in the end give pain both to yourself and Mr. Armstrong."

"You astonish me, Samuel, by the serious manner in which you speak."

"It is indeed, madam, only a subject to be treated seriously, as you yourself will allow." —I then told her the whole story from beginning to end; all that I had heard upon the subject, both from her brother and from Mr. and Mrs. Northington.

"Good God!" she exclaimed, "is it possible!—I always thought that there scarcely ever was such a brother; but had no idea, till this moment, how great were the sacrifices he had made to us! All that Mr. Northington said to my husband is then sufficiently accounted for; and instead of his being delirious, I was

rather in a delirium myself when I thought him so." Then, after relating what had recently passed between her and Mr. Shelburne, she concluded with saying, "You have had a good deal of conversation with Mrs. Northington, do you think her still attached to my brother?"

"I assure you, madam, that in the very first conversation I had with her, she asked me a number of questions relative to him and his present situation, which I thought rather singular. They seemed so irrelevant to the subject which occasioned the interview, that I could not in any satisfactory way account for them. But since I have heard from Mr. Armstrong that he once believed her attached to him,—since I have heard Mr. Northington say that her heart was always his,—I have had no doubt that this was really the case; and I am equally convinced that she never was more attached to him than at this moment."

"O what have I done then in suggesting my husband's interposition to procure the clause respecting him in Mr. Northington's will being omitted! Yet no!—its insertion, whatever may be her wishes, could not be agreeable to her; it would seem as if there must have been something in her conduct which indicated to her husband what a feeling mind would endeavour to conceal; it would seem to cast a sort

of reflection upon her, extremely wounding to a mind of real delicacy."

She was in the midst of these reflections when her husband joined us, to whom she related what she had just heard; while he in return imparted to us the result of his conferences in Bedford Row, both with the husband and the wife. In consequence of what passed with the latter, he had suggested to the former the objections he thought there appeared against what he had directed to be inserted. Mr. Northington was at first unwilling to retract: he said he considered what he had done only as a piece of justice; and he wished his death, with all its attendant circumstances, to be some atonement for his life. At length, however, he yielded, on the reflection that a construction might be put upon it, by ill-natured persons, injurious to his wife's reputation; but he said he should make it his earnest request to her personally, that she would never let any consideration with regard to him interpose to prevent her following her inclinations.

As some days had now elapsed since I inquired after Mr. Northington, on quitting Mr. Shelburne's I proceeded to Bedford Row. When I had made my visit, and was retiring, I met at the room door, as I went out, the very gentleman whom I had seen not many days be-

fore ushering the belles of our wharf home to the arms of their parents. I was both then and now entirely ignorant who he was: I did not even know his name. But I instantly recollected his features, and he seemed equally to recollect mine; so that we passed each other with that kind of expressive bow which indicated plainly a mutual consciousness of having met before. I thought he looked as if somewhat surprised at seeing me.

"So, Anastasia," said he, on entering the room where sat his niece, "I have caught you in the very act of flirtation with a young man! But how in the name of fortune did you become acquainted with him?"

"Very naturally, my dear uncle. In imparting to you the particulars of the unfortunate affair which brought on Mr. Northington's accident, I mentioned an intimate friend of young Armstrong's having followed him into church, for the purpose of preventing the performance of the marriage ceremony. It was the same young man whom you met at the door; he it was who restrained my husband when he would have gone away, immediately on Mr. Corbett's appearance, and who was therefore the ultimate cause of his being in his present state. He has consequently almost of necessity been made a sort of party concerned in all that has since

passed, and has very naturally been anxious to hear how poor Mr. Northington was going on, and called occasionally to inquire after him. But you seem to be acquainted with his person, uncle? I did not know that you had ever seen him."

"It is very true that his person is only recently known to me, and it was rather in an extraordinary way that I came to the knowledge of it. Of him himself I have, however, heard a great deal, God knows whether true or false. It seems you know no more of him than in character of the intimate friend of young Mr. Armstrong."

"Very true: at least all I know besides is, that he is clerk to Mr. Carberry, the great coal-merchant in Thames-street. Indeed the first time I saw him was when he came officially from Mr. Carberry, to settle an account with me. He is, I am told, though so young, very much in the merchant's confidence, and it is generally supposed, will, when of age, which he is nearly, be taken by him into partnership. He was a sort of *élève* of Mr. Armstrong's, and was by him recommended to Mr. Carberry, who is, you know, his brother-in-law."

"*Elève* is a very fine word, which will bear being translated in many different ways; and

unless the scandalous chronicle is here more than usually scandalous, a monosyllable of five letters will give the translation of it in this instance. You know, my dear Anastasia, I never love much to talk of, or even to think of, Bernard Armstrong. His conduct, with regard to you, wounded me deeply, the more so in proportion to the very high opinion I had previously entertained of him; I really thought him as near perfection as a human being can be, I considered him as utterly incapable of injuring any one. Above all things, I should never have suspected him of such coquetry as he actually practised; I expected from him the most strictly conscientious conduct with regard to your sex, and I was therefore the more grievously disappointed and mortified when I was forced to consider him as behaving ungenerously towards you. I have consequently wished, if possible, to forget that there was such a person in the world, and never, I believe, have mentioned his name to you three times since I ceased all intercourse with him. But I could not help sometimes hearing of him; and I must confess, that the way in which I did hear of him with regard to one particular circumstance gave me scarcely less concern than I received from his treatment of you; at the same time it diminished my

regrets that he had not become my nephew. This élève, according to the generally received opinion in the country, is an *indiscretion* of his own."

"Dear uncle, I really do not know how to believe this."

"I was myself unwilling to believe it at first; and yet I have since, almost in my own despite, been obliged to give it credit. One thing is notorious, that the mother of this young man had been married ten years without having any family, and at last this child came forth, the only one she ever had. She was wife to the blacksmith of the village, who, almost immediately upon the birth of this child, was promoted by the rector to be parish clerk. He has the reputation of being a sensible shrewd man, and has always been so particularly patronized by the rector, that people have suspected there must be more reasons than appeared on the surface. The son of Vulcan, however, never seemed to suspect the fidelity of his helpmate; or, if he did, he wisely pocketed his suspicions, and made a semblance of being only the more proud of his offspring for its having been so long in coming. He immediately was seized with a strong desire, or perhaps the inspiration did not originate entirely within himself, to educate this son, being the only

hope of his family, as a gentleman. In this he was seconded by Mr. Armstrong, who kindly promised him all possible assistance in promoteing his views; nay, he carried his kindness to such a length as even to take the boy under his own tuition. He brought him up therefore with his avowed son, making no difference at all in the instruction he gave the two boys; allowing them also to be inseparable as play-mates and companions.

"Sam Danville has thus acquired a fund of polite and useful learning, such as is not often obtained by persons born with much higher pretensions to it; as well as all those accomplishments of a gentleman in which Bernard was so eminently qualified to be his instructor. In short, he was put by him in every branch of education so entirely upon a footing with his legitimate son, that it is scarcely possible to conceive philanthropy towards the offspring of an obscure mechanic in the village to have been the sole principle under which he acted; it seems as if there must have been a consciousness that the one child had in fact as much claim upon him as the other.

"In this I certainly do not condemn him. If I consider him as very reprehensible for having been guilty of the lapse which brought this second charge upon his hands, yet I sincerely be-

lieve that Bernard never could have abandoned a child who he had reason to think owed its being to him. And in my opinion the guilt of having been illicitly the author of existence to a child, is very small in comparison with that of abandoning it when it is come into the world: this I think one of the most heinous sins of which human nature is capable, though not among those which are generally esteemed so; indeed 'tis one but too often passed over without any censure at all.

"Be all this as it may, the fact is, that Bernard has given this boy a very superior education, designing him for the church; that is to say, the reputed father always expressed an earnest desire that his son should be a clergyman, and Bernard was always extremely ready to second his views. The young gentleman, however, for a hundred excellent reasons that he gave, could not fall in with his father's wishes, but at his own desire was placed in Mr. Carberry's counting-house; though people say that his being immured there is a waste of talents, for that he is capable of making a figure in almost any situation. It is, however, strongly suspected, that the fancy of being a coal-merchant's clerk rather than a clergyman, is not without its secret motives; and the rather, because the youth has not, in other instances,

been particularly characterized for his humility. *Au contraire*, on the strength of being the young rector's companion, he always carried himself extremely high towards his natural associates, the village youths, and never could condescend to enter into their sports and pastimes. The motive, indeed, by which he is suspected to be influenced, is rather a proof of his aspiring ideas than of his humility; 'tis thought that he has a tender attachment to Mrs. Carberry's daughter by her first husband, which he judged could be better pursued as clerk to the lady's father-in-law, than as a student at the university."

Mrs. Northington was certainly not particularly gratified with this history. She had always retained such a disposition towards the first, indeed the only object of her affections, that it was much more pleasing to her to hear good of him than ill. In that point of view there was nothing that rendered the history agreeable; but perhaps, in another, she felt it no little subject of mortification. If she had seen with regret that Sophia Middleton was preferred to her by the man whom she herself preferred to all others, yet Sophia was a gentlewoman, the daughter of a clergyman, one whose rank in life was not beneath him. But that the wife of a blacksmith should have

gained such an ascendancy over his inclinations as to bring on such a connection, did seem mortifying; and for the first moment in her life she was inspired with something like an emotion of indignation in thinking of him. This was the more cruel, since it was a moment when, perhaps, if her heart had been thoroughly examined, she had begun to admit renovated hopes of an union which had always been the great object of her wishes;—at such a moment, it was doubly cruel to be called upon to consider him in an unworthy point of view.

"Indeed, uncle," she said, as Mr. Anderson finished, "this story gives me pain; I have never ceased to esteem Mr. Armstrong, I have always endeavoured to persuade myself that in his conduct towards me he acted under some unfortunate delusion; and I had rather not have heard a circumstance, which must, if true, greatly alter my opinion of him. Excuse me, then, if I ask where you may have heard this story?"

"On that subject, my dearest niece, I am very ready to satisfy you. Or perhaps I shall rather *dissatisfy* you, since you may not be altogether pleased to learn that my information is not gained from one or two quarters only: the story, such as I have told it, is very gene-

rally current in the neighbourhood of Langham. The first intimation I ever heard of it was, when some twelve years ago I accompanied a friend to look at a small estate he was about purchasing, near Ambresbury. We took an attorney from Ambresbury with us, to look at the proposed purchase,—when, as we were walking about, the conversation led to the name of Mr. Armstrong being mentioned by this attorney. An irresistible impulse, for which I never could satisfactorily account to myself, led to my making use of the opportunity presented, for asking a number of questions concerning him. I knew that his wife did not live very long after their marriage, but was not aware how soon she had died; and I began by asking, as if from having some slight acquaintance with the name, whether Mr. Armstrong did not marry a lady of that neighbourhood.

"The attorney replied, that Mr. Armstrong was a widower before he himself came into the country; but he understood that he had married a Miss Middleton, daughter to the then minister of Ambresbury, and that she died not much more than a year after their marriage.

"'She could not then leave a large family, I observed, and perhaps died in child bed?'

"The attorney answered, that she did indeed leave a son, but did not die in her lying-in; she lived, he believed, two or three months after, and died of a decline. Some odd stories were however in circulation relative to the whole affair, over which a cloud of mystery always seemed to have hung.'

"These kind of insinuations only excited my curiosity the more earnestly, and I could not help saying, 'How do you mean, sir?—I do not understand the expression of a cloud of mystery.'

"'The truth is,' the attorney replied, 'that very contradictory stories are told upon the subject. Some say that she was in a decline when they were married, brought on by her being exceedingly attached to him, while it was a long time before he could be persuaded by her friends to marry her. Others say that the decline originated in a discovery she made soon after they were married, that there was a woman in the parish, the blacksmith's wife, for whom her husband had a *tendresse*, and this, by preying upon her mind, at length destroyed her health. How that was, I cannot pretend to say; but thus much is certain, that there is a boy, the undoubted child of this very woman, whom Mr. Armstrong educates with his own son, making scarcely any dif-

ference between them: he evinces indeed a partiality for him not easily to be reconciled to pure philanthropy alone; it seems as if it must originate in some more powerful motive.'

"Anastasia, you will perhaps accuse me of having been somewhat of a gossip in this matter, and having fished with a true gossip's relish for a piece of scandal. Indeed, my love, I think the accusation would not be wholly unjust, and I am ready to plead guilty to the charge,—to acknowledge that, in the warmth of my anger against Bernard, I was too ready to catch at a piece of history derogatory to him. Still, however, I am afraid it is true; for though this was the first intimation I had of it, I have since heard the story so repeatedly, that I know not how to doubt it. Your brother too, when he was down at Langham, not above a year and a half ago, heard the very same thing; with the addition, that Mr. Armstrong had just before procured the youth a very advantageous situation with a brother-in-law who was a great coal-merchant in London. At this some of the neighbourhood were rather scandalized, and said it was a shame that he should put off his ———s upon his own family in such a way. Others defended the measure, and said there was no great harm in gentlefolks having these kind of misfortunes

now and then, if they did but provide for the children comfortably; and who so proper to put them under as their own relations, to whom the secret might be told without danger of their blabbing? Though it must be observed, that according to these good people, the thing was already so well known, that *blabbing* was wholly out of the question."

"Indeed, my dear uncle," Mrs. Northington here could not forbear observing, "if this story rests upon no better foundation, I think one may be at liberty to doubt its truth without being liable to the charge of unreasonable scepticism. My brother has always been most unaccountably prejudiced against Mr. Armstrong, and therefore ready to believe any thing reported to his disadvantage, without the least examination. It is surely very hard that such kindness could not be shown to the child of a parishioner without its being converted into a subject of scandal."

"My good Anastasia, I have often told you that you were over candid in the view you have all along taken of Bernard's conduct; or perhaps too much blinded by your partiality to the man to see things in their true colours. But if this be a subject that really gives you pain, I am sorry that I have told the story. It was the odd coincidence of my having recently,

in a very unexpected manner, twice met this young man; which renewed it so much in my mind, that it was told almost involuntarily. I had often heard that he was a fine young fellow, too handsome to be the offspring of the forge; and so indeed I think. I could fancy besides, that I traced in his features some resemblance to Bernard; so that, altogether, my mind was full of him. However, let us now have done with the subject."—And the subject was dropped.

Whether, in telling the story, Mr. Anderson had any idea of giving his niece an oblique hint not to encourage my visits, I will not pretend to say; but if he had such an intention, it proved wholly ineffectual. On the contrary, Mrs. Northington, perhaps almost insensibly to herself, gratified by an acquaintance which seemed something like a renewal of the connection between her and the former object of her attachment, received me more and more cordially every visit I made her. I must observe in this, as in many other instances, that though I relate the facts in the order they happened, many were not known to me till long after.

CHAPTER XVI.

More correspondence.—Meditations occasioned by the letter.—Additional light thrown upon some very dark transactions.—A removal out of town.

It was not above a week or ten days after I had been down at Langham, as convoy to poor Walter, that I received the following letter from my father:

'Dear Sam,

'This is with mine and my old dame's kind love to you, and I don't know that I should have wrote to you now, because we had the pleasure to see you so lately; and indeed, Sam, I think every time we do see you, it gives my old dame and I more and more pleasure, and we grow more and more proud of you. Which to be sure we never had greater reason to be proud than the last time you was here, for to think that Mr. Conway should be so condescending as to ask you to go and see him, and treat you just like an equal. There couldn't be a greater honour than that, and I says to Hannah, says I, This is all along of Mr. Conway's thinking Sam behaved so well when he see him one day at Mr. Armstrong's; which I think indeed that no gentleman born can

behave more like a gentleman, or for that matter look more like one.

'But I couldn't help writing, Sam, though it is such a little while since you was here, to tell you what Mr. Conway said, because it must be a great pleasure to you to hear it, which it is also a great pleasure to me to tell it. 'Twas but two days after you went away that he was riding promiscuously by my shop; so I was there, and had just been talking with Ambresbury doctor about his little poney, which you know, Sam, though he is a doctor himself, he always asks me to subscribe for his horses, because he knows that I'm a better judge about horses than he. So I had been talking to him, for he said that the poney was a little lame of one foot, and he couldn't tell what was the matter; so I looks first at one foot, and then at another, which I said, Why, sir, says I, here's a shoe that wasn't put on at my shop, I'm sure; or if it was, and I can find out which of my chaps did it, I'd turn him off directly for using a poor beast in such a manner; 'tis a downright shame, and 'tis nothing else makes him lame, poor dumb creature!

'So, says he, You are quite right, Robert,' for it was put on at Salisbury, the other day when I was there; I thought the shoe was a

little loose, and I carried it to a smith to tighten it. Tighten it, indeed! says I, and I suppose 'twas Tim White as did it, for it looks like his work; he have tightened it with a vengeance; you may call that being a smith, if you please, but if I couldn't do my work no better, I'd shut up shop tomorrow, and never pretend to take a hammer into my hand again as long as I live; 'tis a wonder partly that every horse that's shod by him doesn't go lame. But, sir, says I, my advice is to have the shoe taken off, and let the poney run in the field for a week or two without a shoe, and by that time I'll be bound he'll be quite well; then if you'll send him over to me, I'll put his shoe on myself, and I dare say he won't be lame any more. So then he asks me if I could let him stay and run in my field, and he'd leave him with me and walk home; and then, when I thought he was well enough to be rode again, I could send him over; which that I said he was very welcome to do, and I'd put him into my bit of a stable at night. With that he gets off and leaves him with me; and I'd just begun taking the shoe off, when Squire Conway comes up quite by himself, no servant nor nobody with him, so good-natured, and not proud like some people that never can go out without a servant; but he's no such sort of man, just

like Mr. Armstrong, for you know he never wanted to have servants after him, but would open the gates for himself when he was riding out, just as good-natured and free as if he'd been a farmer that hadn't a servant at all.

'Well, so Mr. Conway, he comes up, Robert, says he, that's a mighty pretty poney, is it your own?—So I says No, sir; and then I tells him it was Ambresbury doctor's, and the poor beast had got lame, and was going to stay with me to be cured; and after we had talked a little about the horse, I says, I hope you won't please to be offended, sir, if I humbly take the liberty of thanking you for your goodness to my Sam, t'other day, which I thought it the greatest honour that could be done him, and so did Sam too. So then Mr. Conway says, Indeed, Robert, says he, I was very glad to see your son, and shall be very glad to see him whenever he is with you, if I happen to be down. He is a very sensible, conversible, young man, and extremely well behaved; I know of few men of his age so well informed, or more agreeable company. I assure you, Robert, says he, and this is quite true, Sam, for as sure as ever I'm your father, Squire Conway said every word that I'm going to tell you; I assure you, Robert, says he, I think he has been too well educated to be bu-

ried in a counting-house; it is a great pity that he did not like to go into the church, he would have made a very good figure there.

'Why, so I always thought, your honour, says I, and I do think that nobody would have known better how to make a sermon, and preach it too, which I was very much disappointed when he couldn't fancy the church, and liked better to be a coal-merchant. To be sure a coal-merchant is a very good thing, and God forbid that I should speak disrespectfully of trade! for people may come to be great men, mayhap Lord Mayor, or such kind of things; and I dare say Sam will always be a good lad, and get forwards whatever he does, and who knows what may happen at last? But then it would have been a very great pleasure to me to hear him preach, if he could but have fancied it. And all this I should not have told you, Sam, because you know I never talk about such things; there's no good in complaining of disappointments, for what's said is said; and when one has given one's consent to a thing, one has no right to be always bothering about it, especially when there's so many things to be thankful for, and nobody can have more things to be thankful for in a son; so I shouldn't have told you but for what Mr. Conway said.

'So I answered, that it would have been a great pleasure to hear you preach, if you could but have fancied it; and then Squire Conway, he says, Why, says he, I understood Mr. Armstrong that your son had no objection to the profession, only he thought that he had a poor chance of getting forwards, and that it might be a great many years before he could get any preferment, and be able to do any thing for you and his mother, to make you comfortable in your old age; if he had been likely to get preferment, he would very readily have gone into the church. Why so, that was the thing that Sam always talked, I said; and his mother and I, we was always quite sorry that he would think about doing for us; for we don't want to be made ladies and gentlemen, and not work while we've an eye or a hand to do with; and for that matter it would have been a greater pleasure to us to see him a gentleman, than to be a lady and gentleman ourselves.

'So then Mr. Conway he says, But 'tis not too late for him to be a clergyman now; he has indeed lost a year or two at the University; but he is young, and that is easily regained, if he should be disposed to alter his mind, and return to college. Indeed I think it would be worth his while to turn it in his mind. If

he has no other objection to going into the church than because he considers his prospect of promotion indifferent, that really does not appear to me an insurmountable objection. I said his honour was very good to think so, and have such favourable opinions about you, and as to that matter I could say nothing about it; for now Mr. Carberry had been very kind to you, nobody could be kinder, and you wouldn't perhaps like to leave him; which then Mr. Conway says, Well, Robert, says he, if your son should change his mind, I shall be very glad to hear it, and I'm sure he'll do credit to any profession he's in. So I thanked him for his goodness, and then he rode away.

'But, Sam, it has been running in my head ever since, that Squire Conway was thinking, if you was a clergyman, that he could have given you a living, for they say he has another besides Langham. I mean, however, when the minister that has it now dies; and they say he's mortal old, upwards of eighty, or may be almost ninety; but God forbid that I should covet it for you while he's alive! which that you know would be sinful, and breaking the tenth commandment, and God forbid that I should wish him to die a bit the sooner! But when a man comes to that age one can't help thinking that he hav'n't much longer to live,

and it runs strangely in my head that Squire Conway has got a notion, if you'd leave the coal trade, and go into the church, that he'd give the living to you; but as you prefer the coal trade, why it's no matter, only 'tis equally kind of him as if you could accept it. So that is all I had to say about Squire Conway.

'I must, however, tell you besides, Sam, that young Mr. Walter, he came to mine yesterday promiscuously, on purpose to tell me that his dear papa had had a letter from you, and that you was quite well; which I thought this very pretty and good-natured of Mr. Walter, and it was quite a pleasure to see him, he looked so gay and cheery-hearted, quite another thing to what he did when you brought him down from London. Though, I suppose, he was then crossed in love, which that I know is a very hard thing even for working folks such as we, and much harder for gentlefolks who hasn't so much to do, and has time to think more about it. And Mr. Armstrong he seems to fare better and better every day, there cannot be a greater pleasure than to see how well he looks.

'So no more at present, dear Sam,

'From your ever-loving father and mother,

'Robert and Hannah Danville.'

"Humph," I said within myself as I finished

reading this letter, " there certainly was something remarkable in this conversation with Mr. Conway; it really appears as if what he said was not altogether without design.—And if I were once more to change and go into the church, I should then be in a situation not so much beneath.—Pshaw! why do I admit such thoughts?—No, no, it would make no difference with regard to her; and besides, have I not strictly prohibited myself?—Away! away! the idea is absurd!—Nay, there seems no very good reason for supposing that Mr. Conway had any particular meaning; he made a few civil speeches to my father, and I must immediately put my own construction upon them, and then must hastily associate them with other ideas, against which I have vowed a determined and never-ceasing warfare. But away with them!" —And I folded the letter up, and thrust it into a confused heap of different papers of other kinds, that it might not come in my way again very readily; for I was afraid lest, by reading it over and over, I might nurse myself into a belief which I had much better not cherish. Yet I must confess, that for several days these ideas would haunt me in spite of myself, and I had more than once almost unawares half opened the drawer in which the papers lay, for the purpose of reading the letter again. I always,

however, checked myself before I had actually begun my search for it.

In pursuing my inquiries into the affair of poor Walter's matrimonial adventure, I had called occasionally at the lodgings in Hatton Garden, whither Mrs. Corbett had been removed, in order to learn how she was going on. On one occasion I met with her husband, when I could not forbear entering into conversation with him, and inquiring by what means he had been informed of the ceremony that was about to take place. It was obvious that his wife could not be his informer, since she supposed him dead: besides, her scream of astonishment at his appearance, plainly showed that he was to her a very unexpected guest. He said that he had always remained too much attached to her to cease wishing to hear of and reclaim her, and there never was a momen when he was not ready to have received her again, if assured that she was a sincere penitent. "But for two years, sir," said he, "however unwearied were my researches for her, they were made in vain; I had no doubt, from many circumstances, that it was Mr. Northington who had seduced her away from me. But there was one thing of which I was not aware, and which contributed to foil my researches; this was, that he had assumed the

name of Bridport, whereas my inquiries were directed to the name of Northington.

"At length, however, I was furnished with a clue which left me no room to doubt that I had discovered my wife's retreat, though I found that she and her seducer were passing under feigned names. I therefore wrote to her, offering her my forgiveness, and to receive her again if she would quit the unhappy course of life she was leading: but I received no answer. I wrote again and again, but still in vain, no answer was returned; and after some time I thought it useless to trouble her or myself further upon the subject, I was afraid she was irretrievably abandoned. Still, however, I could not forbear endeavouring secretly to inform myself how she was going on, and found that, not long after I had ceased to write to her, she had abruptly left the lodgings, and no one knew what was become either of her or the gentleman. It was a long time before I could again learn any tidings of her; but at length I traced her from one watering-place to another, still with the same man, sometimes passing for his niece, sometimes for his wife, till last summer I heard of her under the former character at Brighton. From thence I traced her to a house which Mr. Bridport had taken in Bedford Row; and here again I wrote to her, of-

fering her once more an asylum under my roof if she would quit her seducer; but still not a word of answer was to be obtained.

"When this unhappy woman quitted me, a sister of mine came to stay with me, at first under the idea that it was only to be for a time; but she has remained with me ever since. Among her acquaintance is a woman who keeps a pastry-cook's shop near Bedford Row, who, one day, when she was calling upon her, was very full of a Mr. Bridport and his niece, who were lately come to live in the Row, and who laid out a great deal of money with her. The niece she said was a most charming young lady, nobody could be more affable and good-natured, she had every body's good word, and all the servants talked how fond her uncle was of her, and what a deal of money he'd probably leave her. One day lately, when my sister called, some jokes and innuendoes respecting this Miss Bridport, that passed between the mistress of the shop and a person with whom she was talking when my sister went in, led her to suspect that the good woman had discovered the truth with regard to the reputed niece; that she did not in reality stand in that relation to the man, who passed for her uncle, but was his mistress. We have since, however, been convinced that they had in view the intended marriage of the

young lady, since Mr. Bridport had even carried the fraud so far as to have ordered a quantity of wedding cake from these very people.

"On the evening before the wedding, my sister again called upon her friend,—when, for the first time, she suspected that the wise looks and winks of the pastry-cook had a reference to a projected marriage, and she concluded that Mr. Bridport himself intended to marry my unfortunate Mary. I had been out of town the whole day upon business, and came home very late, so that she did not then think of imparting to me her suspicions: indeed, as she had no idea that the ceremony was so soon to take place, she did not consider the matter as sufficiently pressing to render such an immediate communication of it necessary. She the rather deferred mentioning it till the morning, as I returned a good deal fatigued, and she thought it would give me fresh uneasiness, and disturb my night's rest.

"However, as we were both early risers, by seven in the morning we had met, and she had imparted her news to me. I was struck with horror at the idea of this ceremony, well knowing that she could never legally be the wife of another while I was living; nor could I be easy without going immediately to Bedford Row, resolved, if I could not by fair means

get access to my wife, to claim the interference of the civil power. I arrived at the house just as a carriage drove away from the door, in which, as I was informed, were Mr. Bridport and his niece, with the young man to whom the latter was going to be married. This was the first word I had heard of a young man; and I was even more shocked than before, since it seemed evident that this must be some unfortunate youth on whom the most cruel delusion had been practised. I therefore ran, or rather flew, to St. Andrew's church, whither I understood that they were gone; you saw me arrive there, sir, scarcely knowing where I was, or what I was doing.

"My wife has since told me that no letter from me ever reached her; that, if my kindness had been known to her, she should certainly long ago have returned to me; but she thought that my indignation at the treatment I had received, prevailed over every other feeling, and that I was resolved never more to see her, or concern myself about her. She has led, she says, a very miserable life with Mr. Bridport, who was alternately fond to excess, and jealous to excess, and his company was scarcely less irksome to her in the one mood than in the other. A thousand times she has thought of escaping from him, but to me she dared not

think of flying; and though willing to have worked for her subsistence, what was she to do with a ruined character? Doubtless all my letters were intercepted by him, lest they should have had the effect of reclaiming her, and inducing her to leave him. Lately she was made to believe by him that I was dead; but this was not till he was desirous of marrying her, sir, to your friend. She tells me that she was most reluctant to concur in the imposition practised upon him, and she only yielded to menaces of being otherwise turned pennyless on the town; hoping, by her future conduct, which she had resolved should be very different from her past, to atone to him in some degree for having been so scandalously duped."

I was now by this communication put in full possession of every particular respecting the late infamous transaction, all which were regularly imparted to Mr. Armstrong and Walter, as they came to my knowledge. Mr. Northington continuing in a deplorable state, suffering exceedingly, yet not appearing likely to go off immediately, he expressed after a while an anxious wish to go somewhere out of town, if that was possible. The surgeon gave it as his opinion that he might be re-

moved with safety, and it would perhaps even be better for him. A house was accordingly taken for him at Brompton, whither he was carried about a month after the accident had happened, accompanied by his wife and daughter.

CHAPTER XVII.

Further effects of sorrow.—New instances of the advantages of travelling.—A consolatory epistle.—Further progress in aërial architecture.—A match refused.—Two of the characters in the drama finally disposed of.

Mr. Carberry was extremely eager to get out of town this year. Unable to prevail upon himself to see any company excepting those immediate connexions whose visits could not with any propriety be declined, he soon found it extremely irksome to be constantly refusing the intended civilities of his acquaintance; and he felt that nothing could be so great a relief to him as to remove entirely out of the way of their well-meant but not the less wearying importunities.

Accordingly, he removed to New Lodge the beginning of May, not the better pleased with London, since almost the last occurrence of importance before he quitted it, was the receiving new and more exorbitant demands than ever from Maurice. After four months spent at Rome, where, from his own letters, it was fairly to be inferred that he had been duped and imposed upon in every possible way, alike

by the Borrowdale family and by the traders in virtù in the Roman capital, he and the party had removed to Naples. It was from thence that the letter was dated, and it announced their intention of remaining there a few weeks, after which they should cross over to Sicily, whence they should proceed to Lisbon, looking in at Gibraltar in their way. He hoped that it might be possible for them to be in England again in the autumn, though indeed there were such exhaustless attractions in the enchanting countries over which they had been travelling, that it would require no common degree of resolution to tear themselves away from them.

He indeed did not know that they should have been able to turn their thoughts homewards, but for the French decree which ordered the arrest of all Englishmen within the French territories. It was true that this decree did not immediately affect them, as they were happily at that moment beyond the boundaries to which it extended; but there was no knowing what the First Consul might not take into his head next: therefore the Earl of Borrowdale and he had agreed that it was hardly safe for them to remain any longer on the Continent than just to see what was worthy of observation in the Neapolitan dominions. They had otherwise purposed returning by Vienna and Berlin, in

order to visit those courts, perhaps even to have gone to Petersburgh; but, circumstanced as things now were, that was not to be thought of. For he pretty plainly insinuated, that both he and the earl thought their persons and talents of so much importance to their native country, that it was a duty to her not to put them too much to the hazard.

Not the least notice was taken of Mrs. Carberry's death, or of the last letter he had received from his father. Mr. Carberry could only be assured from an allusion by which it obviously appeared that he considered him again as a widower, that his letter had ever been received. The conclusion of the letter announced his having sent a draught from Rome just before his departure; and he trusted, he said, to the liberality he had so uniformly experienced for its being answered.

In such a letter there was nothing very consolatory to Mr. Carberry; nothing to make the world assume to him a more cheering aspect. He had lost a wife for whom he had the highest regard, and this was a grievous affliction; but she had died as she had lived, respectable and respected, and he had the fullest confidence of her eternal happiness. In this thought he could find some consolation. His son seemed almost equally lost to him; and to the total

loss of his society was to be added the mortifying reflection that he was rendering himself contemptible in life, and running a career of folly and extravagance, which if not in time reformed must occasion the most alarming apprehensions as to its consequences, both temporal and eternal. The large demands which had been made upon him, he had the mortification of reflecting, were spent in any way rather than in seeking those improvements and advantages which might have been derived from travel in the public line of life to which he had destined his son.

On going down to New Lodge, Katherine suggested again to her father-in-law the expediency of sending her little brother Edward to school; but Mr. Carberry said that he did not know how to part with him, and he thought it would be of no consequence to wait till another year; that, as it was no great distance from London, Sam Danville could come down once or twice a-week to see how the poor child was going on; nay, indeed, he said he thought Katherine herself fully competent to giving him all the instruction he wanted at his age. I was accordingly furnished with a horse, on which I was to ride down whenever I was not particularly wanted at the wharf. Such at least was the intention professed. But if sometimes, from Mr. Fenton's telling me that I was very much

wanted there, three or four days passed without my going to New Lodge, I was sure of receiving a summons from Mr. Carberry. On such occasions a kind reproach would sometimes be thrown in by the worthy merchant, at my having been so long without coming down; to which when I urged that Mr. Fenton wanted me, he commonly replied by an emphatic Pshaw!

On leaving London, he announced to me his intentions of taking me into partnership in a year or two, as soon as some particular business relative to a mine in the north, of which he expected to become the proprietor, should be settled. He said he should not have thought of delaying till that time to make me his partner, but that he was of opinion it would be better first to have this matter arranged. He should then retire wholly into the country, and leave the burden of the business entirely to me. For these kind intentions I made him all proper acknowledgements.

When they were announced to my father, the renewed ideas of my going into the church, with which he seemed to have been a while inspired by Mr. Conway's suggestions and observations, gave way entirely to the advantages of the coal-trade; and in his answer to me, after many warm expressions of gratitude to Mr.

Carberry for his kindness, he proceeded:— "Well, Sam, I always thought, and now I feel quite sure, that if it do but please God to spare my life ten or twelve years longer, it will all be just as I have said. And indeed I don't think it will be more than ten or twelve years before you are quite a great man; because it has pleased God that you have got forwards at a full gallop, like as a body may say, thanks to his mercy, and to Mr. and Mrs. Carberry's goodness. For who could ever have believed, that before you had been quite on two years in Mr. Carberry's service, he should have thought of taking you into partnership? and though it mayn't be yet these two years, as he has said it, I look upon it as good as done, and two years is soon gone and past. Never, to be sure, could I have thought to have seen you so soon in such a profitable business; which if you had gone into the church you could not have had a living by that time, being that in two years you'll be only three-and-twenty, and nobody you know can have a living while they are four-and-twenty; nay, God knows you might not have had a living perhaps of many's the good year after. Besides, you'll nigh hand get more by being partners with Mr. Carberry than by a living. And it will be a great thing to see upon your bills, and upon

your waggons, and upon your ships, and every where, CARBERRY and DANVILLE; which that I shall think a particular honour, almost as great as if it had been said, the Rev. Mr. Danville; though that to be sure it would have been a great pleasure to me to hear it. And who knows, Sam, but if it please God to spare me ten or twelve years longer, I may see you Lord Mayor? And then for certain, if I have but a leg left to stand upon, I'll come up, for it will be a glorious thing indeed to think that my Sam's riding in that fine coach.'

The summer passed on without any particular occurrence. Every visit I made to New Lodge Mr. Carberry was more and more lavish in his kind expressions towards me, and seemed more and more unwilling to part with me again: he would often, therefore, detain me two days instead of one, and even then I seldom departed without his saying, "Well, well, Sam, I know it must be so, but indeed I am almost lost without you." This at times disconcerted good old Mr. Fenton very much, nor could he always forbear to make his remarks upon it. "To be sure," he said, "it was paying a clerk for nothing, as it was impossible that I could be of any use in the counting-house when I was to be absent for a whole day or more two or three times a week. It was certainly no bread

and butter of his; the money was not his, but Mr. Carberry's; but for his part he should look at it twice before he thought of paying a clerk a higher salary than he had ever done yet, only for galloping here and galloping there, and not perhaps touching a pen and ink for days together."

He even once went so far as to give Mr. Carberry a hint upon the subject, observing, "that if young Danville was to go on in that way, always out, he must get another clerk, for he was himself often obliged to do the business that Danville ought to do." To this Mr. Carberry replied, "he was very welcome to take two or three more clerks if they were wanted; but that Sam Danville was of great use to him in writing letters, and doing a hundred other little odd jobs for him; and his journeys therefore backwards and forwards between London and New Lodge would not be discontinued. He was often saved by them from coming up to town himself, and that was an object of much greater value to him than the salary of half a dozen clerks."

By means of these visits I had greater opportunities than ever of seeing Katherine, and examining all the minute features and shadings in her character; and the more closely it was observed, the more I continued to find it deserving

of the utmost possible admiration. To the cheerfulness of twenty she added the steadiness of twice that age. She studied the tastes and fancies of her father-in-law in the most minute details, and the whole household œconomy was regulated accordingly. Her great study seemed to be to render his life as happy and comfortable as possible; to soothe by her kindness the irritation which he began too sensibly to feel, and which he could not forbear sometimes evincing by hasty expressions at the conduct of his son. Indeed I believe it was very much owing to the little prospect he saw of ever deriving any comfort from Maurice, that he became so anxious to have me often with him, in some sort to supply his place.

Katherine was, besides, so like a mother to her little brother and sister, that the death of their mother, how exemplarily soever her maternal duties had been performed, was hardly so far a loss to them. Her patience and assiduity in giving them instruction were such as few mothers would have taken the trouble of exerting; and there are certainly not many things, among the duties of a female, which require a greater degree of patience and equanimity of temper than the instructing and educating children. It is a very difficult task to observe the proper medium between harshness

and severity on the one hand, and over-indulgence on the other. Few there are that do not err at times in one of these respects; and if Katherine could not be said never to fall into any mistake upon the subject, she evinced at least a nicety of discrimination upon it, a judgement and discretion not often to be found, and which at her age might really be called extraordinary.

Mr. Carberry offered to take a governess for Sophia, as he said it was almost unreasonable to expect that her sister's education should be added to the numerous other cares she had upon her. Katherine acknowledged the kindness of his intentions; but said that she knew her mother would above all things have objected to Sophia's being consigned to the care of such persons as usually undertake the office of governess in private families. Their knowledge of any subject they engage to teach is commonly extremely superficial, and they are generally much more assiduous in their attention to objects of outward show than to those that are really useful. Such were the sentiments, she said, which she had often heard her mother express; and if Mr. Carberry would, therefore, be satisfied with the instruction she could give her sister, assisted by that of masters in the winter when they were in London, she should

be much happier in the conviction that nothing was then done very contrary to her mother's wishes.

Nor among her family cares was attention to the poor forgotten. Mr. Carberry was truly generous and humane in his disposition, and wished, as far as lay in his power, to make every body around him happy. He had often heard his wife talk of all that had been done by her brother to ameliorate the situation of the labouring class in his parish, and describe the beneficial effects resulting from his efforts; and he was very desirous of rendering the poor in his neighbourhood as much models in their line of life, as were those at Langham. Katherine was truly happy in promoting his views by every means in her power, and took upon herself the superintendance of a school which was instituted for instructing the girls, as well as many other objects with regard to the female part of the little community; while Mr. Carberry himself overlooked the boys' school, either in his person, or by me as his deputy. He had the satisfaction of seeing his efforts not exerted in vain; but that a fair prospect was soon opened of the cottagers round his estate being in a few years as orderly and well regulated in their conduct, as the parishioners of his brother-in-law.

All that I thus saw only fixed my attachment to Katherine every day more and more firmly in my mind ;—every day I felt more and more strongly, that though the idea of possessing her was one which I was constrained resolutely to repel, yet that all other women became constantly greater objects of indifference to me. This reflection gave me real uneasiness upon another account, conscious as I was of the mortification it would occasion my father, should he quit the world without seeing me married, and likely to perpetuate the name of Danville. Yet it was a feeling too powerful to be combated. In Katherine my ideas of every thing truly amiable and interesting in the female character were realised ; to her alone therefore could the homage of my heart ever be devoted ; and I not only had no inclination to unite myself to any other woman, but I should have been guilty of an act of baseness towards another in thinking of it. I must own that this was a painful state of existence; nor could the many other reasons I had to be thankful for the lot assigned me by Providence, and to which I was not insensible, so subdue my rebellious spirit, but that I was sometimes disposed to think my fate particularly hard. I always endeavoured to repel the idea, but my feelings would not always be entirely controlled.

In the course of the summer I was put to a severer trial than I had yet sustained, when an offer was made to Katherine by a gentleman who had for some time been intimately acquainted with the family. He had been in an unfortunate situation for many years, having a wife under confinement incurably insane: she had died about a year before, and it seemed as if the widower only waited the time that decency required to make his proposals. In point of situation and establishment in life it was a very advantageous offer, nor indeed less so as to the man himself, for he had an excellent character, and was universally respected; the only shadow of an objection which appeared was, that he was twenty years older than Katherine herself. I had long suspected that he was attached to Katherine, and was consequently in some sort prepared for the event; yet I cannot describe my sensations when Mr. Carberry told me that proposals had actually been made by him. The idea that it was impossible for me ever to possess her was sufficiently painful, but it was not wholly insupportable while I did not see her possessed by another; but I was now so truly wretched that I thought there hardly was in life a greater torment to be endured; and it was not without a conflict, in which at some moments I was

scarcely in my senses, that I restrained myself from hastening to her, and making a full confession of my sentiments. Honour was, however, once more victorious, and I still remained silent.

I was almost tempted to consider it as a reward of my forbearance, when I very soon learned that the proposals had received from Katherine a decided refusal: it was a relief to my mind for which I cannot render any reasonable account, because I can truly say that I did not consider her as therefore at all more likely to be mine. Mr. Carberry expressed much uneasiness at what she had done, saying that he was afraid she was influenced by her consideration for him; and as it was a very advantageous offer, he wished her to reconsider the matter; he exhorted her earnestly to put him entirely out of the question, and determine as if she had nobody but herself to consider. He would not deny, he said, but that he should feel the loss of her very much; but he should be extremely distressed at the idea that he had been the occasion of her rejecting a match so very much to her advantage. She replied, that certainly, even though she had been strongly attached to the man, yet, sensible as she was of the very great kindness he had always shown her, she should have felt great

reluctance to the idea of quitting him at the moment when it was somewhat in her power to evince her gratitude in a more solid way than by words only. In the present instance, however, she could assure him, that while very ready to acknowledge the gentleman's merits, and flattered by the partiality he had expressed to her, yet she had no inclination to marry, and hoped she should be permitted to persist in her refusal. Mr. Carberry said, that if such were her real sentiments he would say no more: and so the matter ended.

Walter continued with his father during the whole summer, when the great question of the profession in which he was ultimately to be fixed was frequently discussed between them. But if one day there seemed a hope of something being concluded on, the next, for a hundred good reasons, it was rejected, and they seemed as much out at sea as ever. On this subject I had several letters from Mr. Armstrong, strongly expressive of the great uneasiness it gave him; and at length he requested me to write to his son, and see whether any thing I could say would assist in bringing him to some determination; or, if I could come down and stay for a short time at Langham, perhaps conversation with me might have greater influence upon him than any thing

said by letter. Both experiments were tried, but tried in vain; two letters that I wrote produced no effect; and I then went down, and made a visit of ten days to my father,—a long time for Mr. Carberry to spare me under the circumstances that then existed. During my stay, Walter told me one day that he had resolved upon studying physic; another day he had resolved to go into the church, and another into the army. On all these he was irrevocably fixed when the resolution was imparted to me; but the next day he had discovered objections to each, which did not strike him at first, and the *irrevocable* resolution was *rescinded.*

"What can be done with him?" said Mr. Armstrong.—I could only answer, with a shake of my head, "Indeed I know not." Yet to vice he was as much a stranger as ever; he was become exceedingly studious, and I was really astonished to find the extended information he had acquired ... in so short a time;—nor, though Mr. Armstrong lived a very retired life, did he ever seem to feel a want of more gaiety and variety; he would have been perfectly content if his then mode of life could have been insured to him for the remainder of his days. He talked to me once or twice of the unhappy affair which occasioned his leaving

London, and said that it had given him a disgust with the world, which he did not know what he should ever get over.

As to the parties concerned in that affair, Mrs. Corbett, after awhile, consented to accept the forgiveness generously offered by her husband, and returned to his house. But his kindness only increased instead of diminishing her remorse; so that she fell into a rapid decline, and died in half a year. Her seducer survived her but a few weeks: he continued at Brompton in a state of severe suffering, under which he received the most kind and consoling attentions from his wife and daughter, and expired at length in the arms of his wife, warmly acknowledging her kindness, and praying to Heaven to bless and reward her for it. By this event she was left absolute mistress of a very large property.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

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